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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

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APPEAL TO READERS

WE have to announce that we have arranged for the distribution of *Scrutiny* to be taken over by Messrs. Deighton, Bell and Co., Ltd., Trinity Street, Cambridge. It had been for some time becoming obvious that we could not go on carrying the whole burden of work ourselves. But the new arrangement inevitably involves further expense, and, since *Scrutiny* was only just paying its way (a remarkable enough achievement), it is plain that we must have more support if there is to be a confident future. So we appeal to subscribers to renew their subscriptions (they need have no fear of our defaulting); to readers, where they have not done so already, to subscribe; and to all who think that *Scrutiny* performs an important function to do all the propaganda they can: our potential public is still much larger than the actual, as the steadily growing circulation indicates.

We have economized to the utmost: the rinds were thin enough anyway. So we are asking subscribers to pay postage in future, viz., 8d. extra a year, and correspondents who require answering to enclose stamps.

A subscription form will be found inside the back cover.

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RESTATEMENTS FOR CRITICS

CRITICAL attention is something to be grateful for, even when it is as pettish in animadversion as 'Ille Ego's' review of *Scrutiny* in *The New English Weekly* for January 5th. This is not to be ungrateful for the generous notice that we have been so widely accorded: warm acknowledgments are due. Nor is it to flatter 'Ille Ego' with the suggestion that his comments are very subtle or profound: his pettishness betrays itself, in the familiar ways, as one of the familiar manifestations of uneasily ambitious immaturity. But the misunderstandings he exhibits in naïve forms have, we know, from spoken criticism and from correspondence, a fairly representative quality, and we tender him thanks for the occasion he provides.

Scrutiny, he complains, refuses to be committed. Instead of giving honest and undivided allegiance to its true 'god,' T. S. Eliot, from whom it 'obviously derives' (like most else in 'literary Cambridge these past ten years') it goes whoring after D. H. Lawrence. Worse than that, it was conceived in sin, and it has from birth onwards denied its god: 'It has its origin in a desire not to be committed to Mr. Eliot,' or to any other god or prophet. 'It is very definitely not-committed. Indeed, its primary concern appears to be precisely that: to avoid being committed.'

To what, it might be asked, is 'Ille Ego' committed? Anyway, 'very definitely,' to knowing the ante-natal history of *Scrutiny* and the 'reality' of Blake, D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot. Under three of these heads, at least, we admit to being much less 'committed.' But the more naïve self-committals of 'Ille Ego' may be left to themselves. When he is usefully representative is when he puts his fundamental incomprehension in so plausible a form as this: 'The distinction is suggested in the title. The *Criterion* judges; *Scrutiny* scrutinizes. Compared to judgment, scrutiny is a non-committal occupation.'

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We stand self-condemned, then, by the modesty of our title, by our very lack of pretension. Yet title and pretension are not everything. Forbearing the inquiry whether *Scrutiny* has committed itself less often and less decisively than any other journal in particular judgments, let us ask what, where judgment is in question, the criterion is: what are the standards? The values of intelligence, tradition and orthodox Christianity? But judgment is not a matter of abstraction; it involves particular immediate acts of choice, and these do not advance the business of judgment in any serious sense unless there has been a real and appropriate responsiveness to the thing offered. Without a free and delicate receptivity to fresh experience, whatever the criterion alleged, there is no judging, but merely negation. And this kind of negation, persisted in, with no matter what righteous design, produces in the end nullity: the 'criterion,' however once validated by experience, fades into impotent abstraction, the 'values' it represents become empty husks. The safety sought in this way proves to be the safety of death.

Of course there is more to be said; there is another side. It is not wisdom that stops at advocating the free play of individual sensibility. Indeed, the truly living sensibility cannot be content to be merely individual and merely free. One cannot suppose it either possible or desirable to go on 'experiencing' as if there had been nothing before. And with the beginnings of maturity the problem of organization becomes one for serious effort; taken seriously, it leads to a discipline and a training, emotional and intellectual, designed to 'preserve the individual from the solely centrifugal impulse of heresy, to make him capable of judging for himself, and at the same time capable of judging and understanding the judgments of the experience of the race.' But this is no matter of simple acceptance or conformity. It is part of our great debt to Mr. Eliot that he has made it so plain that there can be no easy way or simple solution. Of tradition he wrote: 'It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour.' But it is just our criticism of *The Criterion* that so many of its writers are condemned by the spirit of this dictum. Judgment cannot be a matter of applying the accepted (or 'inherited') standards, any more than thinking can be a matter of moving the recognized abstractions according to rule.

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Again, in his essay on Massinger, Mr. Eliot wrote: 'What may be considered corrupt or decadent in the morals of Massinger is not an alteration or diminution in morals; it is simply the disappearance of all the personal and real emotions which this morality supported and into which it introduced a kind of order. As soon as the emotions disappear the morality which it ordered appears hideous. Puritanism itself became repulsive only when it appeared as the survival of a restraint after the feelings which it restrained had gone.' The bearing of this upon (say) a grave and persistent lack, in a journal standing for order, intelligence and orthodoxy, of critical sensitiveness to contemporary literature—to literature and art in general—does not need elaborating, perhaps.

Our criticism, then, is no repudiation of our debt to Mr. Eliot (and *The Criterion*), but the reverse. Nor when we suggest that D. H. Lawrence should have been a test is it necessary, or intelligent, to conclude that we have transferred our allegiance to D. H. Lawrence. 'But to *use* Eliot to escape the reality of Lawrence,' pronounces 'Ille Ego,' 'and to use Lawrence to escape the reality of Eliot, is to insult both of them.'—To suggest that one should 'accept' Mr. Eliot or D. H. Lawrence is to insult both of them, it might be retorted, by gross incomprehension, for, whatever the 'reality' of either may be, it is certainly such that to contemplate 'accepting' it is to repudiate it. The reality of Mr. Eliot in one sense is just what is in question. And to propose Lawrence as a test is not to suggest that Lawrence's reality is simple, a matter for allegiance, loyalty or acceptance. An intelligent, that is, a respectful, attitude towards him must necessarily be a discriminating one; for though 'Ille Ego' speaks of Lawrence's 'philosophy' as something to be accepted or rejected, those who have read what Lawrence wrote know that he was inconsistent, and inconsistent in such ways that to think of systematizing him is to betray a complete obtuseness to his significance.

What Lawrence offers us is not a philosophy or an *œuvre*—a body of literary art—but an experience, or, to fall back on the French again, an *expérience*, for the sense of 'experiment' is needed too. In him the human spirit explored, with unsurpassed courage, resource and endurance, the representative, the radical

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and central, problems of our time. Of course he went into dangerous places, and laid himself open to reprehension as setting dangerous examples and inciting to dangerous experiments. But if he earned reprehension, we owe him gratitude for earning it.

More than one summing-up is possible, and it would be absurd to demand agreement with one's own; the stress will fall here for some and there for others. But especially by those who stand for 'order' should he have been recognized as a test: a refusal on their part to consider him seriously must appear a very bad sign indeed. And to take the easy recourse of dismissing him in a plausible, too plausible, bracket with Rousseau, or to use Mr. Murry against him, amounts to such a refusal. The reluctant conclusion is at last compelled that the insidious corruptions attendant upon 'classicism' have not been sufficiently guarded against; that 'order' and 'tradition' have ceased to be a living tension, a strenuous centrality, and have become something very different.

'Ille Ego' complains that we desert 'at the point where Eliot becomes the orthodox Christian. That, as might have been expected, is too much for Cambridge.' But what *is* orthodox Christianity? (And is 'Ille Ego' 'committed' to it?). If it means the kind of rejection of life implicit in Mr. Eliot's attitude towards sex, then we do certainly dissociate ourselves at that point. Lawrence's preoccupation with sex seems to us much less fairly to be called 'obsession' than Mr. Eliot's, and very much preferable. And we know that many who profess Christian sympathies share this view.

If we go on to say that it does not follow that we accept any Laurentian religion we shall, perhaps, not now be taunted with cowardly evasiveness. What, indeed, was Lawrence's religion? 'Curse the Strachey,' he wrote during the War, 'who asks for a new religion—the greedy dog. He wants another juicy bone for his soul, does he? Let him start to fulfil what religion we have.' To talk of the 'religious sense' that he represents may sound weak, but it should not to those who have read the *Letters*. For many to-day the essential thing is to meet such a sense in the concrete, dominating ('I am a passionately religious man'), and unmistakably an expression of health, courage and vitality. And we meet it, we find, in Lawrence—in the Lawrence who has the

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right to exclaim as he does against 'glib irreverence,' because all his writing exhibits reverence as a fact, a fact of honesty, strength and sensitiveness; the Lawrence who disturbs complacency about 'sex reform' so much more potently than Mr. Eliot.

This is not to pronounce against the ultimate necessity of theologies, creeds and rituals: it is probable that *Scrutiny* enjoys, and will enjoy, support from readers who profess and practise. But most, we imagine, who respond to Lawrence's 'one must speak for life and growth, amid all this mass of destruction and disintegration' find the possibility of adhesion to any formal religion a remote one—as remote as a satisfying answer to the question, What does such adhesion mean in effect? Does, for instance, a declaration of 'faith in death' mean a negative acquiescence in the drift of things here below, or, as it might, the opposite?

We have at any rate some notion of the test. And we know that, in such a time of disintegration as the present, formulæ, credos, abstractions are extremely evasive of unambiguous and effective meaning, and that, whatever else may be also necessary, no effort at integration can achieve anything real without a centre of real consensus—such a centre as is presupposed in the possibility of literary criticism and is tested in particular judgments. But 'tested' does not say enough; criticism, when it performs its function, not merely expresses and defines the 'contemporary sensibility'; it helps to form it. And the function of *Scrutiny*, as we conceive it, is (among other things) to help to persuade an effective 'contemporary sensibility' into being—for that, rather, is what the critical function looks like when decay has gone so far.

The peculiar importance of literary criticism has by now been suggested: where there is a steady and responsible practice of criticism a 'centre of real consensus' will, even under present conditions, soon make itself felt. Out of agreement and disagreement with particular judgments of value a sense of relative value in the concrete will define itself, and, without this, no amount of talk about 'values' in the abstract is worth anything. And it is not merely a matter of literature ('It would appear that "literary appreciation" is an abstraction and pure poetry a phantom'—T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, p. 257): there is hardly any need to illustrate the ways in which judgments of literary value involve

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extra-literary choices and decisions. It should at any rate be enough to suggest that those who differ philosophically and theologically—who differ about religious 'beliefs'—may agree that Mr. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence both (however one may 'place' them relatively) demand serious attention, and that the supersession by Book Society standards of the standards that compel this judgment will, if not fiercely and publicly resisted, be a disaster for civilization.

Such consensus can, and must, test and justify itself in action. Above all there are, or we should determine that there shall be, immediate consequences in education: at any rate, the determination, resolutely pursued, would provoke real agreement and real differences. This (need it be said?) is not to show contempt for creed and theory, or to suggest that the function represented by, for example, *The Criterion*, is unnecessary. But what we propose does seem to us certainly necessary if creed is not to be merely debilitating and theory a relapse upon the wrong kind of abstraction, inert and unprofitable.

The Marxist, however, will still protest that (as one correspondent puts it) we are invoking education in order 'to escape the urge to political action.' It is of no use, it would seem, while he remains a Marxist, to reply that we do not offer education as an alternative. We cannot, it is true, look forward with any hope to bloody revolution, but we are not (again, need it be said?) politically indifferent. It seems appropriate here to speak in the first person. Let me say, then, that I agree with the Marxist to the extent of believing some form of economic communism to be inevitable and desirable, in the sense that it is to this that a power-economy of its very nature points, and only by a deliberate and intelligent working towards it can civilization be saved from disaster. (The question is, communism of what kind? Is the machine—or Power—to triumph or to be triumphed over, to be the dictator or the servant of human ends?)

When I add that I believe one cannot reasonably pretend to lay down what are the right immediate steps without consulting specialists, and that one of the functions of *Scrutiny* is to provide criteria, from the realm of general intelligence, for determining which specialists can be trusted, and how far, the Marxist will

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smile. I can only reply, by way of earnest, that a serious educational movement will inevitably, and, as far as I am concerned, explicitly, aim at fostering in schools and in education generally, an anti-acquisitive and anti-competitive moral bent, on the ground (there are others) that the inherited code is disastrously and obviously inappropriate to modern conditions.

But this is not said in any hope of conciliating the Marxist, for he it is who insists on the one thing, the one necessary preoccupation: to confess to a sense of complexities is to play the bourgeois game. Thus our correspondent complains: 'you refuse to admit that "art" and "culture" are among the chief instruments of oppression—a form of dope. Or if you recognize this . . . you are scornful at the idea that Eliot *and* Walpole, Wells, *Punch, Scrutiny,* Stopes and the *Outline for Boys and Girls* are all manifestations of bourgeois culture. I contend that they are—and Eliot seems to me as typical as *Punch,* but "at a different level of appeal" (or "sensitiveness" or "intelligence").' —Marxism is indeed, to adapt Lenin's adaptation[1] of the 'dope' formula, the alcohol of the intellectual, warming and exalting, obliterating difficulties, and incapacitating for elementary discriminations. After the passage just quoted, one is not surprised to get a defence of Prince Mirsky's '*toutes les valeurs vivantes sont du coté de la classe ouvrière,*' for to include Mr. Eliot and *Punch* under 'bourgeois' is to empty the term 'value' of all serious meaning.

It is true that one might call not only *Punch* and Mr. Walpole, but also Mr. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence 'products' of capitalist civilization, in that the use made by these two last of their talents was determined by the environment into which they were born. But rejection, after all, is not the same as acceptance, and it is a bourgeois incapacity that cannot recognize the human values that Mr. Eliot and Lawrence, in their different ways, are asserting against the environment—very different ways, and if the

[1]See W. Gurian, *Bolshevism: Theory and Practice,* p. 223 (Sheed and Ward, 10/6d.). We have had regretfully, for lack of room, to exclude a review of this book, which is the more useful because its point-of-view (Catholic) is explicit.

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values are different too, they are alike in being equally not generated in the modern economic process. Indeed, this is our criticism, that in the matter of 'values' the Marxist is too bourgeois, too much the product of the material environment. It is impossible to believe that he who is so obtuse to essential distinctions means anything when he speaks of the 'culture' that will supervene upon a politico-economic revolution: the finer human values have, so far as his sense of them goes, been left behind for good in capitalist Progress.

The simplifying dialectic itself works like a machine. 'You are quite right,' says the correspondent already quoted, 'in stating that "the dogma of the priority of economic conditions means a complete disregard for—or hostility towards—the functions represented by *Scrutiny*." Orthodox Marxists (*i.e.* Leninist Marxists) would be hostile to *Scrutiny* . . . ,' and he goes on to stigmatize as a '*contre-sens*' our talking of a culture that will have a 'momentum and life of its own' when we have admitted that 'the economic process must profoundly affect existence.' Yet, by anyone not trained in the Marxian dialectic, the nature of the complexity is not hard to recognize. There seems no reason for repeating the argument of *Under Which King, Bezonian?* that the dialectic itself brings the Marxist to the point at which he must contemplate a quite different relation between culture and the economic process from that of the past. To put it simply, instead of dictating to the mass of mankind their uses of time, the economic process will free their time, in large measure, for uses dictated by inner human nature, if there should be one capable of dictating.

But is there such a thing as 'inner human nature?' The Marxian theory (and historical forecast) would seem to leave little room for it, though implicitly postulating the need for a very potent one, to take over when the Class-War ends and the economic process recedes into unobtrusiveness; and that is why the Marxian future looks so vacuous, Wellsian and bourgeois. That mechanical efficiency should be a religion for Russia, and ever more ambitious engineering a sufficient future, is, in the present phase, understandable and perhaps necessary. But, however badly civilization may work, the West can imagine a 'technocratic' or 'planned economy' America too easily to find it an inspiring vision; a more adequate incitement to devoted activity is needed, and needed at once.

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We assume an 'inner human nature,'[1] and our recognition that it may be profoundly affected by the 'economic process' persuades us that it must rally, gather its resources and start training itself for its ultimate responsibility at once. A cogent way in which the human spirit can refute the Marxian theory and the bourgeois negative lies open in education. '*L'éducation pourra tout,*' the correspondent referred to above credits us with believing: that, perhaps, is answered. '*Scrutiny* will, no doubt, offer destructive analyses of education as it is—there are precedents enough—but the Scrutineers will effect no change.' If we do not make the obvious and modest response, that is not because we rate our own powers or importance high, but because we know that we speak (having the luck to be in a position to do so) for a formidable and growing body of conviction. Whether or not we are 'playing the capitalist game' should soon be apparent, for a serious effort in education involves the fostering of a critical attitude towards civilization as it is. Perhaps there will be no great public outcry when it is proposed to introduce into schools a training in resistance to publicity and in criticism of newspapers—for this is the least opposable way of presenting the start in a real modern education. Yet the inevitable implications, accompaniments and consequences of such a training hardly need illustrating.

The teaching profession is peculiarly in a position to do revolutionary things; corporate spirit there can be unquestionably disinterested, and by a bold challenge there, perhaps the self-devotion of the intelligent may be more effectively enlisted than by an appeal to the Class-War.

F. R. LEAVIS.

[1]Some readers, of course, will demand more at this point, appealing to 'the judgments of the experience of the race.'

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CULTURE AND LEISURE

MR. LEAVIS, in the last number of *Scrutiny*, issued a challenge which will be, I think, very welcome to Marxists: a challenge to reflect upon, and to restate, their attitude to questions of the utmost importance. It is impossible for me to go into the greater number of the issues raised in *Under Which King, Bezonian?* but I should like to offer a few reflections upon two of them; the conceptions of culture and of leisure.

Now first of all, I think Mr. Leavis is not quite correct in thinking that Marxists regard culture as the outcome of the '*methods* of production.' A more accurate phrase would be '*mode* of production,' that is, 'the totality of productive relations.' This may seem a small, verbal point, but it really has some importance, since it has led Mr. Leavis to conceive the connection as a rigidly determined, mechanical one rather than a fluid, dialectical one. Though secondary, the cultural level reached by a society at any point becomes in its turn a factor helping to determine productive relationships.

When we talk of 'bourgeois culture' we refer to the sum of the ideological superstructure characteristic of the present historical period, in which the bourgeoisie is the ruling class. This includes much that the Editors of *Scrutiny* would perhaps prefer to call lack of culture. The novels of D. H. Lawrence and the methods of salesmanship described in Mr. Denys Thompson's article *Advertising God* do not, indeed, seem to have much in common at first sight. A little consideration will show, however, that neither could have come into being save in an advanced industrial country and in the 20th century. Both are perfectly natural products of the capitalist system in the period of Imperialism.

There is here a possibility of an ambiguous use of the word culture, and Trotsky seems to have used it indifferently in both senses. Bourgeois culture, then, is the result of a historic process, and cannot be accepted as uniformly valuable or rejected as

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entirely valueless. The purpose of *Scrutiny* seems to be to combat the harmful elements of the bourgeois 'culture complex' and to preserve what is valuable. This is entirely praiseworthy: the only question we have to ask ourselves is: what are the most hopeful means towards this end?

Is is possible, on the one hand, to purge away those elements that we find objectionable? And on the other hand, may not the proletarian revolution, while sweeping away advertising and the gutter press, destroy also the delicate flower of 'culture' in the restricted sense of that word? This seems to be the opinion of Mr. Leavis, and, presumably, of the Editorial Board of *Scrutiny*.

Here Trotsky's misleading formulations have led to a misapprehension of the nature of the transition period between capitalism and communism. The main weakness of *Literature and Revolution* is precisely its undialectical approach to this. Trotsky seems, as it were, to see capitalism on one side of a ditch and communism on the other, with the necessity to jump over, 'bearing' just so much 'culture' as can be conveniently stowed away in one's pockets. Actually, the period of proletarian dictatorship is not a ditch but a bridge, a period in which the new is growing out of the old. It is a period in which much is destroyed, but far more is it a period of enormous construction. And just as the economic structure of Communist society will be built, and can only be built, on the basis of the achievements of earlier periods, so the cultural superstructure will begin with the most valuable elements of bourgeois culture. History proves that anything which is of cultural value, far from being a 'tender organic growth' possesses a quite amazing tenacity.

Among the things that will be accomplished during the proletarian dictatorship will be the education of the masses in the use of leisure, and a reorientation of outlook on the whole question of leisure and work. This will follow inevitably the growth of responsibility among the workers as members of a ruling class.

It is important here to understand just exactly what 'leisure' is. Clearly it is not merely the state of having nothing to do. No one would think of talking about leisure in connection with the unemployed. On the other hand the Editors of *Scrutiny* are obviously extremely busy people whose time is of considerable value. Yet they have sufficient leisure to undertake the production

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of a quarterly magazine. It seems to me that we must adopt a conception of leisure that is largely psychological. We cannot usefully speak of leisure except in the absence of all the anxieties and uncertainties that beset not merely the unemployed man but also the great majority of wage-earners. Nor can we speak of leisure until work is no longer the antithesis of living.

A leisure society, then, will not mean a society in which no one has any work to do. It will be a society in which drudgery is reduced to an absolute minimum, and in which for the most part the distinction between work and leisure has disappeared. And since men will not have to be relaxed in the intervals of toil, or doped into acquiescence in a system of organized exploitation, there will no longer be any place for the mass production novel or the tabloid press, and the arts will cease to be the preserve of a parasitic minority or of little groups of honest intellectuals attempting to order chaos with pitifully inadequate resources.

Here, and here only, is the 'organic community' which Mr. Leavis and I are at one in desiring. This 'organic community' disappeared not with the coming of industrialism, but, long before, with the coming of the State. (It still exists, or has existed within living memory, in obscure corners of Melanesia and elsewhere). I invite Mr. Leavis to think things over once again, to attempt to get behind that 'Marxian blanket' (which isn't there nearly as often as he imagines), to consider the proportion of means and end, and to see whether the struggle to 'maintain the tradition of human culture' can really be carried far on a basis of ignoring the struggle of classes with which it is inseparably connected. I feel that *Scrutiny* is far too valuable a weapon against the Philistines to be left permanently in the position of the two heroes who 'wept like anything to see such quantities of sand.'

A. L. MORTON.

NOTE.—Mr. Morton's communication arrived too late to be explicitly referred to in the editorial note dealing with Marxist criticism. It must be left to readers to judge whether Mr. Morton's points are adequately provided for in that note and elsewhere in *Scrutiny*. We need hardly say that we are grateful for such criticism as Mr. Morton's.

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EVALUATIONS (I)

I. A. RICHARDS[1]

CONVERSATIONAL comments on Richards' work, favourable or unfavourable, seldom express opinions about his actual views; they seem more often than not to be reactions to the general tone of his writing. Nor can this aspect of his work be neglected in an attempt to formulate a more precise opinion: some peculiarity of tone, or some prevailing attitude, undoubtedly distinguishes him from most scientific and critical writers. It would be laborious to analyse this attitude in detail. As a handy label for it, the term 'amateur' (with some of its implications) will perhaps do. It is suggested for one thing by the slight acerbity with which so many 'professionals'—literary critics, psychologists, metaphysicians—dismiss him, together with the slight awe that he inspires in the virginally lay. But it has more important justification than this in two essential features of his work, namely in his insistence upon the significance for 'normal practical life' of his special interests, and in the buoyancy with which he rides over difficulties of detail by means of general principles.

Take, for instance, his basic hypotheses for criticism, and consider the difficulty and labour that would be involved in proving them. Only the spirit of the amateur could enable Richards to express them with as little inhibition as he does. 'The first point to be made is that poetic experiences are valuable (when they are) in the same way as any other experiences. They are to be judged by the same standards.' (*Science and Poetry*, p. 28). 'The greatest difference between the artist or poet and the ordinary person is found, as has often been pointed out, in the range, delicacy and freedom of the connections he is able to make between different elements of his experience.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism*,

[1]This is the first of a series of 'Evaluations' which will be continued in future numbers of *Scrutiny*. There will also be a series of 'Revaluations'.

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p. 181). 'The ways then in which the artist will differ from the average will as a rule presuppose an immense degree of similarity. They will be further developments of organizations already well advanced in the majority. His variations will be confined to the newest, the most plastic, the least fixed part of the mind, the parts for which reorganization is most easy.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 196). 'It is in terms of attitudes, the resolution, interinanimation, and balancing of impulses . . . . that all the most valuable effects of poetry must be described.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 113). Nor has his confidence waned with time. He is still ready to assert (see *The Criterion* of October, 1932) that the explanation of the difference between good and less good experiences 'is inevitably in terms of that order or disorder among "impulses" (or however else you care to describe the elementary processes on which consciousness depends) . . . .' Contrast the more 'professional' attitude towards similar problems. 'Personally I do not think the problem of ethical valuation [of different cultures] is hopeless, but it need not necessarily be undertaken in a purely sociological inquiry.' (M. Ginsberg in *Studies in Sociology.*) 'Moreover, in humanity as it exists at present it is not easy to decide that one physical type is better adapted than another, and, when it comes to deciding which emotional and intelligent types are better or worse, the situation becomes far too complicated to handle with any probability of success.' (T. H. Morgan in a paper in *The Foundations of Experimental Psychology*). These quotations, I think, fairly represent the attitude of qualified specialists when they refer to ethical questions: not hopeless but . . . . The contrast with Richards need not be stressed.

Three hypotheses, distinct although closely related, are expressed by Richards in the passages quoted. They are, roughly, (a) that art and the rest of human activity are continuous, not contrasting; (b) that art is the most valuable form of activity; and (c) that the value of any activity depends on the degree to which it allows of a balancing or ordering among one's impulses. It is the third which is fundamental and upon which the other two depend, and our attitude to his work in general must depend to a great extent upon the view we take of this account of value. The practical purpose of his account must not be overlooked: he is attempting to discover 'a defensible position for those who believe that the arts are of value,' and it is clear from the context

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that he intends primarily a position that can be defended against all those who regard art as something other than one of the practical affairs of life. He attempts in effect to meet the friendly and intelligent Philistine on his own ground. Hence his account of value is best regarded as a systematization based on certain assumptions which are not questioned by the people whom he has in mind. He assumes first that living activity is its own satisfaction and that any questioning of its 'value' is bogus questioning. Next he implies a conception of quantity in living activity and assumes that a further unquestionable satisfaction arises as one becomes *more* alive; he takes as the unit of living activity the satisfied impulse, so that the value of an activity or attitude can be measured, hypothetically, in terms of the number of impulses it satisfies. Further he adopts the view that in all living organisms there is an unquestionable effort after greater and greater differentiation and integration of experience.

The necessary limitations of such an account of value have to be recognized before its usefulness for particular purposes can be judged. It is clear that it cannot, even hypothetically, give us grounds for judgment when a difference of opinion rests on a fundamental constitutional difference between two people. Richards for instance condemns swindling and bullying because they lead to a thwarting of important social impulses: the implicit assumption is that the swindler and bully in question possess the 'normal' social impulses. If they do not, then they cannot be condemned on these lines. You might as well try to convince a tiger of its misfortune in not being a buffalo. The numerical treatment of impulses will not help here; it would be flat dogma to assert that the man without social needs must achieve a lower total output of satisfied 'impulses' than the man with them. And according to Richards it is the total number that matters, for the 'importance' of an impulse is only another term for the number of other impulses that depend upon it. It is difficult to suppose that the tiger, given equal strength and good health, satisfies fewer 'impulses' (fewer of 'the elementary processes on which consciousness depends') than the buffalo. This is only to point out that Richards' systematizing of value judgments cannot, even in theory, lead to agreement in evaluations unless the parties concerned have the same fundamental constitution. In point of fact Richards keeps his numerical conception in the background, and

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implies that greater ordering or integration will of itself lead to the satisfying of more impulses. 'At the other extreme are those fortunate people who have achieved an ordered life, whose systems have developed clearing-houses by which the varying claims of different impulses are adjusted. Their free untrammelled activity gains for them a maximum of varied satisfactions and involves a minimum of suppression and sacrifice.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 53). Similarly in the much finer discussion of development in *Practical Criticism,* where he relates the sayings of Confucius on sincerity to modern biological views, it is the ordering alone that is insisted on. The implication here and throughout his work is that everyone begins with the same fundamental impulses, but that they and the secondary impulses dependent on them get muddled and disorganized, thwarting each other unnecessarily. He is profoundly convinced that the function of the arts is to bring back order. In the discussion of sincerity, moreover, he brings forward, perhaps not explicitly enough, the idea that art is not merely remedial (restoring an original order) but that it aids in positive development; aids, that is, the assumed effort of the living organism to become more finely differentiated in its parts and simultaneously more integrated. 'Being more at one within itself the mind thereby becomes more appropriately responsive to the outer world.' Fundamental difficulties confront anyone who attempts to grasp the full meaning of this integration and this appropriateness. But the essential feature of Richards' attitude to art is clear: he pins his faith to the possibility of its being shown to be a means of further progress along the lines of what we regard as biological advance. This is the essence of his defensible position for the arts. Its significance rests perhaps less on the usefulness of its contentions than on the fact that it was formulated by a writer who is genuinely sensitive to poetry, not by one with convictions of its uplift value, nor by a philosopher who felt that he 'ought' somehow to provide art with a pedestal in his exhibition of the universe.

The practical usefulness of Richards' account of value in convincing the plain man of the value of poetry or in helping us to reach agreement over disputed points is doubtful. After outlining the theory Richards writes (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 51) 'We can now take our next step forward and inquire into the relative merits of different systematizations.' This step remains

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to be taken, unless it consisted in the brief discussion which follows, on the importance of the social virtues. In practice, of course, Richards is able to give us no more help in making these judgments than, for instance, T. H. Morgan offers, in the passage quoted. One might innocently suppose that we should judge a work of art by assessing the number of impulses it satisfied. It is needless to point out that Richards has nowhere done this, nor even pointed out what main impulses any one work of art has satisfied in him. It is of course quite clear that 'the impulse' will not serve in practice as a unit of measurement. Who can say what this smallest impulse is in terms of which the importance of the others must be expressed? There is obviously a vast gap between Richards' theory of value and any actual judgment one may make. To say that 'It is in terms of attitudes, the resolution, inter-inanimation, and balancing of impulses . . . . that all the most valuable effects of poetry must be described' is perhaps as true, and just as helpful, as to say that it is in terms of the combination and disintegration of molecules that all the effects of modern warfare must be described. Even the difference between a pleasing and an irritating variation of rhythm is 'a matter of the combination and resolution of impulses too subtle for our present means of investigation.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 138). And in making up our minds about a poem 'We have to gather millions of fleeting semi-independent impulses into a momentary structure of fabulous complexity, whose core or germ only is given us in the words.' (*Practical Criticism*, p. 317). And if his account of the basis of valuable experience has little practical significance for literary judgments, as a means of judging other arts it is more remote still. The greater part of his chapters on painting, sculpture, and music, must be regarded as something very close to psychological eyewash; he hardly makes the gesture of applying his main theory to these subjects. We have to conclude that this attempt to provide a conception (of a balance of impulses) which will establish continuity between the everyday standards of a civilization advanced enough to condemn the bully and swindler and the standards of its art critics, fails through the remoteness and elusiveness of the common denominator chosen—the impulse.

This conclusion does not affect the significance of Richards' profound conviction of the value of poetry and his belief that

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this value is of the same kind as that implicitly recognized by the civilized Philistine. The significance lies in the fact that such a writer should have felt the need to meet the outside world of common sense and science on its own ground and justify his position by current standards. It is one sign of the uneasiness that those with special qualifications in the arts are experiencing. They cannot now confidently remain specialists, secure in the knowledge of fulfilling a recognized function. They have to become amateurs, looking at the matter from the point of view of the majority and attempting to prove that their function does exist before they can attack their own more specialized problems. This consideration may account for the kind of use to which Richards puts psychology. In the first place it is a means of shaking the complacency of practical people, who are more uneasy at the hints of psycho-analysts than they are at the gibes or fury of artists. 'Human conditions and possibilities have altered more in a hundred years than they had in the previous ten thousand, and the next fifty may overwhelm us, unless we can devise a more adaptable morality. The view that what we need in this tempestuous turmoil of change is a Rock to shelter under or to cling to, rather than an efficient aeroplane in which to ride it, is comprehensible but mistaken.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 57). Secondly, psychology as Richards uses it seems to help him in repudiating the pseudo-mystical monopolists of æsthetic theory whose ideas do more harm than good to his demand for the recognition of poetry as a practical assistance in living. It seems to confer authority on such a statement as '. . . the experience of "seeing stars" after a bang on the nose is just as "unique" as any act of musical appreciation and shares any exalted quality which such uniqueness may be supposed to confer.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 171). On the other hand, the work of psychologists on æsthetics has not been of the kind he has any use for; it has usually implied other standards than his in its approach to works of art, and it has done nothing to show the practical value of such art as it has dealt with. Hence his care to dissociate himself from the professional psychologists. 'Such more complex objects as have been examined have yielded very uncertain results, for reasons which anyone who has ever *both* looked at a picture or read a poem *and* been inside a psychological laboratory or conversed with a representative psychologist will understand.' (*Principles of*

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Literary Criticism, p. 8). And rather than be committed to existing psychological methods he draws still further on the already heavily mortgaged future of neurology. Musical effects, for instance, '. . . . belong to a branch of psychology for which we have as yet no methods of investigation. It seems likely that we shall have to wait a long while, and that very great advances must first be made in neurology before these problems can profitably be attacked.' (*Principles of Literary Criticism,* p. 170). But there is a marked change of tone in *Practical Criticism.* After reiterating his dissatisfaction with much of the psychological work on æsthetics he goes on, 'The general reader, whose ideas as to the methods and endeavours of psychologists derive more from the popularisers of Freud or from the Behaviourists than from students of Stout or Ward, needs perhaps some assurance that it is possible to combine an interest and faith in psychological inquiries with a due appreciation of the complexity of poetry. Yet a psychologist who belongs to this main body is perhaps the last person in the world to underrate this complexity.' (*Practical Criticism,* p. 322). Again, speaking of the harm done by the cruder psychologies, 'But the remedy of putting the clock back is impracticable. Inquiry cannot be stopped now. The only possible course is to hasten, so far as we can, the development of a psychology which will ignore none of the facts and yet demolish none of the values that human experience has shown to be necessary. An account of poetry will be a pivotal point in such a psychology.' His attitude here seems to be one of willingness to leave professional psychology to make its contribution to the problem in its own way, whereas the tendency before was to short-circuit psychological methods by dogmatizing about the essentials of the conclusions they must reach. The change may perhaps be related to the fact that in *Practical Criticism* Richards has a much more demonstrable function that he had in the earlier work. For one thing he can offer his work as a contribution to academic psychology: '. . . . to find something to investigate that is accessible and detachable is one of the chief difficulties of psychology. I believe the chief merit of the experiment here made is that it gives us this.' (*Practical Criticism,* p. 10). Further he offers his work as a contribution to education, and is able to show that even by existing educational standards such work as he has done here has an important and undeniable function. 'This, then, may be made

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a positive recommendation, that an inquiry into language . . . . be recognized as a vital branch of research, and treated no longer as the peculiar province of the whimsical amateur.' (*Practical Criticism*, p. 337).

It is undoubtedly in dealing with problems of communication that Richards comes most closely to grips with his material and least shows the characteristics of the amateur. But to say this ought not to suggest that his work falls into two isolated compartments, one concerned with evaluation and the other with communication, and that they can be appraised separately. It is in fact through a consideration of his theory of value and its limitations that the importance of his work on communication can best be seen.

The conclusion that his account of value gives a basis for agreement only when 'normality' (or identical abnormality) is assumed, might seem to leave us no defence against an endless variety of critical opinions, each justified by an appeal to a fundamental constitutional peculiarity in the critic. Since innate differences do of course exist, we must perhaps admit that in the end we shall have to recognize distinguishable 'types' of critical opinion founded on psycho-physiological differences in the critics, and irreconcilable. But this is too remote a consideration to give 'type' psychologists any excuse for extending their literary labelling. It is still possible to show that differences of opinion in literary matters frequently arise from errors of approach which even those who make them can be brought to recognize. With people who assert that they know what they like the one hope is to demonstrate to them that in point of fact they *don't*, that according to standards they themselves recognize elsewhere their judgment here is mistaken. As these inconsistencies are faced and abandoned, the possibility of agreement with other people grows greater. We cannot tell how far this principle may be pushed, but undoubtedly we have a very long way to go before innate psycho-physiological differences are the sole cause of disagreement between us. The most important part of Richards' work consists in extending the possibility of agreement. From one point of view it is work on problems of communication; from another it offers us exercise in attaining self-consistency in literary judgments, and remotely approaching the 'self-completion' that Richards sees as the ultimate form of valuable experience.

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In this part of his work there are so many distinct contributions—close, fully-illustrated discussions of actual instances—that little general comment is in place. Many of them offer a starting point for further investigation; sometimes there seems a possibility of fresh preliminary discussion, where, as for instance in his treatment of intellectual truth in poetry and of rhythm, Richards does not seem free from ambiguities and shifts of ground; all draw attention to serious possibilities of mis-reading and mis-judging, and all go towards stressing the same main theme, that the adequate reading of poetry is a discipline and not a relaxation.

The relation between the two aspects of his work is well set out by Richards himself. 'The whole apparatus of critical rules and principles is a means to the attainment of finer, more precise, more discriminating communication. There is, it is true, a valuation side to criticism. When we have solved, completely, the communication problem, when we have got, perfectly, the experience, *the mental condition* relevant to the poem, we have still to judge it, still to decide upon its worth. But the later question nearly always settles itself; or rather, our own inmost nature and the nature of the world in which we live decide it for us. Our prime endeavour must be to get the relevant mental condition and then see what happens. If we cannot then decide whether it is good or bad, it is doubtful whether any principles, however refined and subtle, can help us much. Without the capacity to get the experience they cannot help us at all. This is still clearer if we consider the use of critical maxims in teaching. Value cannot be demonstrated except through the communication of what is valuable.' The difficulty of demonstrating the rightness of an opinion even on these lines ought not to be underrated; over the Longfellow poem, for instance, it seems only to have been a drawn battle between Richards and the protocols. But a reliance on improved methods of reading as the most hopeful way of reaching agreement in literary judgments undoubtedly grows out of Richards' practice more naturally than does his explicit theory of value. The suspicion is left, however, that in making practical judgments he is assuming more principles of evaluation than one would expect from the passage just quoted. One weakness of Yeats' transcendental poetry, for instance, is 'a deliberate reversal of the natural relations of thought and feeling. . . .'

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(*Science and Poetry*, p. 74). His charge against Lawrence is rather similar. But *natural relations* . . . Lawrence might have detected a principle of criticism here. The fact is that principles of evaluation remain a necessity for the practising critic even when interpretation and understanding have been carried to their hypothetical limit. How large is the highest common factor in human natures, and how far it can be formulated into agreed ethical principles, are questions that will not be answered in the near future. Yet guesses have to be made; 'To set up as a critic is to set up as a judge of values.' This is a fact that receives less prominence in Richards' later work than it did in his earlier, and it is not surprising to find Father D'Arcy reminding him (in *The Criterion*, January, 1933) that we have to set out 'both to understand the meaning of others *and* the truth of what they say.'

The importance of Richards' work on communication is unfortunately obscured for many people by their annoyance at a too frequent outcropping of the amateur spirit. This shows itself particularly as a romantic inflation of the significance of the topic, in the form of dark hints at the extent of our ignorance and the cataclysm that awaits us as The Theory of Interpretation is pushed further. Exploitation of the Tremendous Idea makes a peculiarly strong appeal to one side of the amateur: for one thing, every professional immediately has the ground cut from under his feet. No matter what a man's standing, and no matter how impressive the substance of his views, you can still regard him from an unassailable vantage-ground if only you happen to observe that he isn't capable of understanding what's said to him. This, according to Richards (in *The Criterion*, October, 1932), is the weak place in the armour of Max Eastman, T. S. Eliot, and Irving Babbitt. They are all 'untrained in the technique of interpretation . . . this is not their fault since the proper training has not yet been provided . . . you must *understand* before you argue . . . When the right training has been provided, our three champions here will be seen to be each journeying through and battling with his own set of mirages.' So much for Irving Babbitt, T. S. Eliot, and Max Eastman. The earlier work too occasionally betrays this anxiety to cut the ground from under the feet of those who might otherwise seem qualified to express an opinion: 'neither the professional psychologist whose interest in poetry is frequently

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not intense, nor the man of letters, who as a rule has no adequate ideas of the mind as a whole, has been equipped for the investigation [into the nature of poetry]. Both a passionate knowledge of poetry and a capacity for dispassionate psychological analysis are required if it is to be satisfactorily prosecuted.

It will be best to begin by . . .' (*Science and Poetry*, p. 9). It is probably, too, as an aspect of the amateur that we must interpret the curiously romantic tone that sometimes appears in Richards' writing. *Science and Poetry*, for example, leaves a strong impression of a thrilled responsiveness to the difficulties and hazards of 'the contemporary situation,' and also of some failure to get at grips with any definite problems that concern people. The latter is a serious failing here, for it prevents him from clinching his argument that poetry is of supreme value as a means of re-orientation. The nearest he comes to specifying more closely 'the contemporary situation' of which one may be 'agonizingly aware' is in his discussion of the neutrality of nature and the impossibility of beliefs. But the former is surely not a concern of fundamental importance to most informed people nowadays, though in some moods they may feel chilled by it. And the impossibility of beliefs—except in some quite limited sense—seems itself to be impossible. Certainly T. S. Eliot has repudiated Richards' suggestion that *The Waste Land* is without beliefs ; but apart from this repudiation it is impossible to see how any living activity can go on without beliefs in some sense, and we must suppose that Richards is speaking only of a special sort of belief. Indeed he seems only to mean that most people have ceased to believe in the possibility of supernatural sanctions or aids. If this is all, the excitement apparent in his tone seems naïve. 'It is very probable that the Hindenburg line to which the defence of our traditions retired as a result of the onslaughts of the last century will be blown up in the near future. If this should happen a mental chaos such as man has never experienced may be expected.' (*Science and Poetry*, p. 82). 'Consider the probable effects upon love poetry in the near future of the kind of inquiry into basic human constitution exemplified by psycho-analysis.' These are very bourgeois bogies. Their worst feature is the way they play into the hands of the would-be emancipated, those whom L. H. Myers has described in *Prince Jali*: 'they depended basically

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upon a solid, shockable world of decorum and common sense. They had to believe that a great ox-like eye was fixed upon them in horror.'

These defects of tone in Richards' writing cannot be passed over. In the first place they tend to attract the least desirable kind of audience, though the astringency and discipline of Richards' best work should be a sufficient safeguard against this. A more serious consideration is that they offer a needless obstacle to an appreciation by better readers of Richards' real significance. To sum up this significance one may indicate the two points of view from which Richards sees poetry: he sees it both as the practised reader who has acquired his standards of culture imperceptibly, and as the plain man of common sense and faith in science who needs *convincing*, without a gradual process of education, that poetry might be of some importance to him. A large part of Richards' work can be regarded as an attempt to find common ground for these two points of view; to find a set of standards recognized by the second man which will lead logically to the position of the first. He sets to work in two ways; first by an explicit theory of value, second by showing up the kind of mistakes that are likely to lead to an under-estimation of poetry. The second method really consists in making explicit, and at the same time telescoping, the steps which those who adequately value poetry must at some time have taken, normally without having analysed them. This second method is obviously of enormous value to people already prepared to take poetry seriously; it may well divert university students, for instance, from their otherwise almost inevitable progress towards the point from which they regard 'the time when they read poetry' with slightly more wistful feelings than they have for 'the time when they played Red Indians.' But whether Richards' methods would be effective in convincing the intelligent and friendly Philistine is another matter. It may be that his work fulfills its purpose by giving those who already value poetry a new assurance that their concern for it is a development, and not a distortion, of 'ordinary practical living.' If this is one of its functions it bears witness to the growing need of those with minority views to justify themselves at the bar of the main community. The main community may not be convinced; perhaps the fundamental need is that the minority should be.

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HISTORY AND THE MARXIAN METHOD

THE writings of the modern Marxists contain explanations which should at least open our minds to the consideration of the Marxian view of history. We need not fear the word 'materialist,' for we are now told that 'materialist' only means 'matter-of-fact'; for us at least, as will be seen later, it need signify nothing more than the modern scientific method in historical study. We understand—for it is satisfactorily explained—that the Marxist is no 'crude economic determinist'; the Marxian thesis does not rule out the influence of individuals or the power of ideas. An interpretation of history which purports to belong to the same intellectual world as 'the linguistic criticism of Mr. Ogden, the æsthetic criticism of Mr. Richards and the methods of the new psychology' is a thing which the most jaded historian would desire to consider afresh; and the worst of Philistines must wish to weigh a theory which claims to be appropriate to our capitalistic age. That variations in means of production are the starting-point of historical change; that what Marx calls 'production-relations' are factors in history which are in a special sense inescapable; that historical change is a dialectical process, the contradiction of thesis and antithesis setting up a movement which results in a new synthesis; and that deep at the bottom of our history there is really the immemorial class-struggle—these are propositions less strange but more intriguing, now, than in former days; for they do not drop into our minds without raising an echo, without stirring at least half a sympathy. So we may be more open to the consideration of the Marxian view of history, as it is embodied in the famous Marxian formulation of the historical process—the doctrine that, within an existing order of society, the discrepant interests of two economic classes provide a contradiction and provoke a struggle, which leads to the formation of a new order, where the same thing happens again. It may

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be useful to analyse this attempt to state the historical process by means of a formula, regarding it, as we are asked to regard it, namely as a 'clue' or an 'approach' to history; and seeking to discover its virtues and to find whether it exposes the habitual fallacies of our own history; which, for the purposes of this argument, we may consent to call 'bourgeois' history. Then we may discuss the dangers of the Marxian system, particularly when it is taken as an 'interpretation' in a wider sense of the word; and this will concern its possible aspect as a 'verdict' upon history. And, to prevent ourselves from imagining that we are considering Marxism in its wider sense, and all that Marxism means—to avoid the misconception that we are examining the Marxian view in any sense save as an historical interpretation and an historical method—it would be useful for us to state the problem we are discussing in something like the following terms: what is the value of the Marxian view to a historian who is himself a bourgeois and who, philosophically, is not a materialist; and who—if we may concede this for the sake of argument—is a conservative in politics?

In the first place, the Marxian formula is supposed to be the 'type' of what we call the historical process, and it maintains that there is such a thing as an historical process, complicating all the purposes of men. Its antithesis in this sense is what the Marxists call the 'individualist' theory of history, the view that history is what it appears on the surface, a human drama, Cromwell fighting Charles I, Fox fighting Pitt, and Gladstone fighting Disraeli. On the individualist view one man achieves his purpose, though it may not be till after he is dead; and so we must thank Martin Luther for our religious liberty, and Charles James Fox for the Reform Bill—emphasising the agency of individuals in the story of mankind. The Marxists do not deny that individuals are at work throughout the course of history; or that, as in the case of Lenin, an individual may succeed in a great purpose; but they emphasise the view that this work of individuals is complicated by interactions which are taking place in history, and they see an historical process of which human beings are the more or less conscious agents. Their whole idiom, when they are writing history, is less closely related than ours to the technique of biography.

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In the second place, the Marxian formula puts before our eyes a certain pattern, and prepares us to examine historical change as though it were taking place in accordance with this pattern. We are told to look for a contradiction—a conflict between thesis and antithesis—and we are to expect, not that either of these will entirely gain a victory over the other, but that the conflict will be resolved by the establishment of a synthesis. History proceeds to something new by reason of contradictions which have arisen in the old order. And change is not the result of accomplished purpose so much as the product of a clash of wills. The antithesis to Marxism at this stage of the argument is the kind of history which hankers after some logical development, and sees men moving step by step towards some expanding purpose, freedom broadening down from precedent to precedent. It is the contrast between these views that Dobb is stating when he says that we ought to think of history 'not as logically continuous but as a dialectical process.' Some people, for example, assume that Protestantism logically 'led to' individualism. Some people see the continuity so directly that they say the Reformation 'led to' the French Revolution. On the Marxian formula we should tend to enquire whether the rise of Martin Luther did not set up a contradiction within the old order of Europe, and whether it was not the clash of authorities, the feud of Protestant and Catholic, which issued in the secular state and a new order that neither party had intended. When we say that 'feudalism declined' we are speaking, again, in simple, unilinear terms; the Marxist would arrive at the real complexity sooner, for he would ask what contradiction was set up within the feudal society to produce interaction and ultimately change. At the same time he does not deny the possibility of such a thing as logical development—he admits that it can take place in ideas and he only forbids us to transfer to the whole realm of general history the process which may take place in the simplified realm of the 'history of ideas.' Also the Marxist does not deny that, perhaps even below everything, there is a development in history—a development in modes of production, for example, in the transition from nomadic society to the capitalistic world.

In the third place, the Marxian formula provides us with a point of view from which we survey history—it is a formula of

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internal reaction within a given society. That is to say, we are told that in a social order a contradiction will arise and will produce a clash, and this clash will end in the emergence of a new order, where the same process starts over again. The Marxists take the whole of society as the unit of study; and the balance of the story is affected by this. We are given the history of a people, not the history of a government. I think that if we honestly search our minds we must confess that, for the most part, the history we learn and read is the history of governments and governmental matters, and it is from these that we are accustomed to take our centre, or to make our approach to history. We do not confine ourselves now, it is true, merely to the record of courts, battles and kings, but some of us seem to imagine that we are telling the story of the people when we are only giving the history of parliament or the analysis of governmental institutions. And often when we talk of the people we only mean the people who politically counted, or when we do remember the whole society we really regard it from the angle of government. I am not certain that we realise the full content of the words: 'the history of the English people,' or that we remember how little the history of England that we possess in our minds really corresponds with the genuine fulness of the concept. And though in our economic history it is true that we study the manor and the craft-guilds, we do not always realise how soon we turn back to the question of governmental action, and how much in dealing with society we start at the top of the pyramid, working downwards and always looking downwards; and it is not without significance, if we are arguing with the Marxists, that even at this point it is economic history that is in question.

But the real advantage of the Marxian view of history, as the study of internal reaction within a society, is most apparent in the new solidity which it has given to what is called 'social history.' For, if this branch of our study is in disrepute with us, that is because our social history generally has something anæmic about it. In the October number of the journal *History*, Sir Charles Firth criticises Macaulay's famous chapter on the state of England in 1685. There is a curious deficiency in this chapter when it is regarded as a piece of social history, and we might define the fault by stating that Macaulay only wrote the social

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history that was preliminary to his political narrative; it is social history from the point of view of a political historian—social history regarded chiefly as background. Some time ago Mr. Rowse reviewed in the *New Criterion* the historical method involved in Professor G. N. Clark's book on the *Seventeenth Century*. He hailed the work as an illustration of what is meant by the Marxian point of view—the analysis of a whole society in every sphere of life, activity and thought—but he seems to think that Professor Clark would have been more consistent with himself and more successful in his undertaking, if he had avowedly adopted the Marxian principle and kept its terms in mind. The weakness of the book—the certain disappointment that it gives—does lie in the fact that it tends to be a series of separate sketches of finance, military organization, religion, philosophy, etc.—and often these sketches are really collections of illustrative data and curious information—when we might have had a deeper structural analysis, a closer study of the inter-relations between the various departments of life. Professor Clark rightly repudiates the view that all things in the 17th century can be regarded 'as mere phases of one common spirit of the age,' and rightly repudiates that interpretation of history which says that 'the economic life of man . . . . explains all the rest of his life.' In particular he does not attempt to explain everything in the 17th century by reference to the economic conditions of the 17th century itself—which would have represented the most childish of the perversions of the Marxian view which we are considering. It still remains true that the 17th century can be regarded structurally and not as a series of separate compartments, and that this conception of it depends upon the pre-disposition of the historian. It is not an accident that historical education, even in this university, is most lacking in the treatment of the inter-relations between the various phases of life; though the Marxists are unjust when they say that we keep our history in separate compartments purely to prevent the discovery of the importance of economic factors in other spheres. It is not a mere accident that bourgeois history fails most of all in what we may call 'social' or even 'general' history, producing trivialities, surface-descriptions, and illustrative tit-bits, or providing an introductory chapter that is like the setting of a piece of scenery. Whatever may be the faults of Pokrowsky's

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History of Russia—and I am certainly not competent to pass judgment on the work in its actual execution—there is no doubt that the author had in his mind a Russian people, not a government; and there is something impressive in his conception of history as the profound structural analysis of a society.

Fourthly, the Marxian formula is couched in economic terms, and this raises the question of its aspect as an economic interpretation of history. It is important to bear in mind the conditions under which we are (at the moment) discussing the Marxian view of history; particularly as this is a point which the modern exponents of the theory have realized and have taken pains to stress. The Marxian formula defines a method, provides a clue for a person who wishes to construct a survey of general history, or to discuss some historical problem or to start a line of enquiry; it does not exist to answer questions which can only be answered by historical research. It is the definition of the predisposition which we should bring when we come to the study of history, and neither this nor any other interpretation of its kind can validly provide us with anything more. This point has been greatly stressed by modern exponents of the theory. In other words, where we should in any case act upon one assumption or another, the Marxian formula prescribes a way of approach; it tells us which end of the stick to pick up. We may ascribe the downfall of Spain to the personality or the policy of Philip II, saying, as so many writers say, in parenthesis, that at the same time there were economic difficulties which were out of his control. I think one could find many writers on Spanish history who have made this interpretation the basis of the very architecture of their story, even when the interpretation is contradicted by the things they themselves say, but say only in parenthesis. With the Marxian method it is simply a question of the order in which these things present themselves in our minds. This method would lead us first to enquire whether the discovery of the New World did not present Spain with problems that the economic knowledge of the time was incapable of meeting; but if he found this to be true, it would not prevent the Marxist from saying that the situation was aggravated by the personality or the policy of a man like Philip II. The Marxian method is not a denial of the influence of ideas upon history; it does not prevent us from believing that

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ideas influence economic facts and even modes of production; it allows us to believe that ideas can influence one another or even make their own logical development; and the extent to which these things are true can only be discovered at any given point by actual historical research. But it does affect the structure of our history whether we begin by seeing the action of a man like Philip II upon the world, and then noting in parenthesis that he himself however was conditioned by a historical situation; or whether we start with an examination of the world he lived in, beginning with the economic conditions and rising if we like to the highest range of abstract ideas, and then see Philip II, greatly conditioned by all this, but acting, so to speak, only on the margin of it. The Marxian interpretation which we are considering is an economic interpretation only in a restricted sense of the words: it claims that there is a fallacy in an attempt to estimate the influence of Protestantism on the economic world, if first of all we have not examined the influence of the surrounding world and of economic conditions upon the development of Protestantism itself. It is not at all a denial of the fact that Protestantism and its religious ideas had an influence in history.

Taking another aspect of the question of the economic interpretation, and speaking for the moment very roughly and by way of crude analogy, we can say that for the Marxist economic history has acquired a special emphasis—it has been given the privileged position which political history has generally had with us. The Marxist puts economic history at the bottom, and, roughly speaking, lays everything else on the top of it, till he rises to the realm of ideas; while we put political history at the top and range everything else below it, reaching ultimately even down to the economic stratum in our turn. This, I think, is particularly our habit when we are dealing with general surveys of modern history. And, whereas, to the bourgeois historian, political history seems sometimes to be the sum of all history, the State is regarded as an all-inclusive end, and politics are at the top of everything—with the result that social history, as we have seen, is a sort of adjunct or background to political history—the Marxist does not need to make such a pretentious valuation, he does not need to say that economics are the most important things in life; he has only to show that, to the historian, the economic element sits somehow at

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the bottom, and that it is taken first because there is a sense in which it comes first. He only has to show that it sets the conditions in the last resort, that it is always reached in the last analysis, and that we shall do well to work until we come to it, even if what we are studying is a religious revival or a political programme or a moral disintegration in society. It is in sympathy with this view—though it is not a necessary corollary of the Marxian method—that the Marxist should analyse modern imperialism, for example, in terms of economics; whereas we are accustomed to an analysis in terms of politics. And Marxian history blossoms out into these economic diagnoses, whereas whig history flowers into its most typical product in what we call political science. And if any of us should believe that this political science has the chief part in forming a discrepancy between our mentality and the contemporary situation, so helping to prevent us from even realizing the issues in the right categories of thought, we might agree that this economic approach to history—even in what might be called its by-products—will better help us to construct a mentality that can squarely set itself to the lines of the modern world. If we do not believe this, it does not matter, for it concerns the by-products of history, not the essence of the Marxian method.

But the real antithesis to Marxism at this stage is the view that on the last analysis ideas do not merely condition but actually determine the course of history; and this view—however much it has been qualified and overlaid—is still the clue to a great deal of the bourgeois system. Rowse very justly quotes the statement from Lord Acton's Inaugural Lecture: 'It is our function to keep in view and to command the movement of ideas which are not the effect but the cause of public events.' In a sense the Marxist stresses the fact that we use history to explain ideas, while the bourgeois has tended to bring in ideas and use them in order to explain history. Pokrowsky, the Marxian historian of Russia, has ridiculed those people who ascribe the decline of tribal society to a decline of tribal ideas or a mysterious dissolving of the 'sense of kinship.' We have all ceased, I believe, to attribute the decay of feudalism to the decline of 'the feudal idea.' But, though we abandon the cruder forms of this heresy, the temptation does lie in the structure of our bourgeois system, and there is no telling to this day what the wisest of historians will not attribute to the Protestant idea. And sometimes the

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extreme form of our heresy is reached when we personify what we call the 'spirit of the age' and make it a special agency in the process of historical change. To the Marxist ideas are concrete facts of history, just as mechanical inventions are; in a sense they are the product of history before they can be the cause of anything. To the Marxist, who, in this respect, is only to be regarded as the matter-of-fact historian, man seems to rise out of nature, the struggle for existence apparently precedes the quest of the 'good life,' history begins where anthropology leaves off, and civilization does emerge as a sort of superstructure, reared last of all. And if God is at the back of everything, still the historian cannot say so; and if transcendental ideas are behind the rumblings of nature or the tides of human life, still they do not come within reach of historical evidence; and though the materialist explanation of the universe may not be a full explanation, or really an explanation at all, still it is the only kind of historical explanation which our apparatus enables us to give. Concerning man himself it may be said that the historian can never reach the essence of him; for the historian can only study him in his external relations, his overt acts, his interplay with environment.

Fifthly, taken in its totality, the Marxian formula gives us a statement of the historical process when reduced to its lowest terms. It tells us, in one respect, where we must begin if we wish to construct a scheme or a survey of history. In another sense it tells us what we shall find conditioning historical change in the last analysis. But, from the moment when this formula is brought to the actual facts of history, we shall watch the historical process for ever complicating itself; for the formula is only a synthesis of the really primary statements that can be made about history. Plekhanov uses an interesting analogy to warn us against the common fallacy of regarding the economic element as a sort of highest common factor, when in reality it is related rather to the problem of reducing history to its lowest terms.

'If, for instance,' he says, 'the dance performed by Australian Blackfellows is a reproduction of the activities of the same tribesmen when engaged in collecting roots, we know where we are . . . . But a knowledge of the economic life of France in the 18th century will not explain to us the origin of the minuet.'

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When the Marxist says that thought itself is conditioned by the development of means of production, he claims no more than that you will have no metaphysics, no experimental science, no rationalistic outlook, before the means of production have reached a certain level, have facilitated division of labour, have complicated the social structure, and have made possible certain kinds of technique. Napoleon said: 'The nature of weapons decides the composition of armies, the theatres of war, marches, positions of camps, orders of battle, and the situation and construction of fortresses.' It has been pointed out that, before Columbus could discover America, ship-building and technical apparatus had to reach the necessary stage to permit of trans-Atlantic voyages. We need not go anything like so far as Mrs. Virginia Woolf who seems to think that £500 a year and 'a room of one's own' are necessary antecedents to the production of good literature. But such statements are comments on the historical process; they are seminal in that they start appropriate lines of enquiry; and they are wise for they remind us that we are living on the earth. I think that they are calculated to encourage a certain form of historical-mindedness.

The Marxist, therefore, would define bourgeois history as that which tends to fall into the individualist heresy, while overlooking the importance of what we call the historical process; that which tends to slip into the mistake of regarding historical change as logically continuous, when this change ought to be viewed rather as a dialectical process; that which tends to see ideas determining change in the last analysis, rather than to assume that in the last resort economic factors are the conditioning element; and that which tends to take the government rather than the whole society as its centre, and to lay stress on political history while it fails to produce any profound social history. I do not think we can deny that the Marxist has put his fingers on the fundamental fallacies of that history which the average Englishman holds in his head. He has seized upon many of the heresies which we tend to unlearn as we become more highly-trained. He has diagnosed the very evils which bourgeois historians often deplore in their own history, particularly the evils which conservative historians often see in whig history. When one person argues that in the Renaissance we are dealing with only a handful of privileged

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people—that the majority of Italians, for example, were superstitiously religious at that very time; when another person criticises the common view that the 18th century was the 'age of reason,' these people are only pulling us towards the position of the Marxists, who demand that we study the whole society as a unit, and condemn us for keeping our eyes upon a privileged class. When people attack the common habit of 'tracing ideas back into history'—watching the Reformation grow through Abelard, Wycliff, Erasmus and the Renaissance, or working towards the League of Nations through the Crusades, the Grand Design and the Holy Alliance—they are joining hands with the Marxists in a protest against one form of the heresy that history is a logical development, or they are attacking the bourgeois assumption that history can be regarded as the story of ideas. Those people who desire that the history of England should not be studied in this university in a number of separate compartments, but desire at the same time that it should not degenerate into a vague and spineless non-technical 'social' history,—these most of all, perhaps, are really hankering after the structural virtues of Marxian history. And with them we might associate those people who feel dissatisfied with the general study of modern European history, on the ground that it too easily falls into dry lines of political or diplomatic story, instead of seeking the structural analysis of society and the relations between movements of thought and various spheres of life. Our economic studies are drawing us in the same direction, and while Plekhanov warns the Marxists that, after all, economic causes do not explain everything in history, our own scientific historians are often showing how, after all, some economic factor which we had ignored comes in to correct a bourgeois assumption. And sometimes it is we ourselves who fall into the heresy that Puritanism is merely the result of the growth of capitalism. But rather than admit the truth that exists in the Marxian interpretation of history, we prefer to go on living with a discrepancy in our minds; our real outlook has greatly changed while our historical theory seems determined not to catch up; and so we slip back, carelessly and unconsciously, into old fallacies that we had forsworn, and we are content very often to start by picking up, still, the wrong end of the stick. There may indeed be some point in the thesis which I think represents the argument

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of Mr. Rowse, that some of us would gain consistency with ourselves, and the history we conceive of would achieve new depth and solidity, if we consented to go the one step further and confess that, in this aspect, the Marxian theory is right.

The Marxian formula, as it is presented by its apostles at the present day, does represent the direction in which our bourgeois history is moving—though neither we nor the Marxists like to admit the fact. Also I think that this is seen most clearly in that kind of history which has a more conservative bearing; and the extreme antithesis to the Marxian method is rather what we usually know as 'whig history.' But if we resist the Marxian method there can be no doubt that the Marxists are much to blame, and if we have misunderstood and slandered the method—as some of its modern expositors assert—there can be no doubt that Marxists themselves have misunderstood it too and have been the cause of our misapprehension. For we cannot be blamed if we judge this method by its actual results when it is put into application by its own apostles, and the greatest argument against the Marxian view is the kind of history Marxists often write, and more particularly the kind of statements they often make about history. It is possible so to emphasise the historical process that we overlook the importance of the 'individual' altogether. It is possible to make the economic interpretation a too direct translation of all history into terms of economics. It is possible to minimise the influence or deny the self-development of ideas, and to come to startlingly crude conclusions concerning the relations between culture and economic conditions. Indeed one could almost say that the Marxian method is very dangerous if one is really a Marxist in the complete sense of the word; its perils are only counteracted if one is bourgeois and perhaps a trifle conservative; for there is no doubt that the tendency to see too directly the connections between culture and the economic situation, is a danger which is greatly heightened if one happens also to be an aggressive philosophical materialist, if one wants to believe that economic factors fully explain the emergence of human thought, and if one regards the Marxian interpretation of history as a weapon to be used in the cause of socialist revolution. Prejudices, passions, assumptions and interests are all pulling the same way, inviting the Marxian historian to an over-simplification of his own method, an over-emphasis of the truth that is in it. The dogmatic

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character of his creed encourages him to turn into dogmas or dead formulæ the hints and clues which are the virtues of his system if they are treated with flexibility. So the best historical method in the world—talking now not of methods in research, which remain the same, but of methods of approach and organization—is the monopoly of the party which, more than any other, is regarded as 'unhistorical.'

But the real objections to the Marxian over-emphasis are reached when the system is regarded not as an approach to history, but as a 'verdict' on the whole course of history. This takes place when the view of history as a dialectical process, a process that moves through contradictions, is translated into the general pronouncement that all history is the story of the class-struggle. Supposing we take the whole of society as our unit and seek a formula that shall be a statement of internal reaction within that society, supposing then that we look for a contradiction within that society, remembering that we are stating the formula in economic terms, then it is true that we have discovered a sort of minimum formula, epitomizing the historical process, but it is also true that, taken in the round, our formula is a description of an economic cleavage in society. This may mean that deep at the seat of human history there is always—though perhaps unconscious—a tension between economic classes. And the Marxist seems to claim that this tension has a primary importance, that it is a conditioning element which in the last analysis is in some way inescapable. Perhaps we shall not understand the Reformation in any given geographical region until we know what in that region the relations between economic classes were. Perhaps it is right that when we come to the study of history we should look for this fundamental cleavage in society and make it the beginning of our story. In other words the formula may be defensible when regarded purely as a clue, or an approach to history. But Marx himself is responsible for the further leap to what we may regard as the grand conclusion—the transportation of this original assumption to the dignity of a 'lesson' or 'verdict' of history. He is responsible for the pronouncement that all history is really the story of the class-war.

Further, the Marxist, in his protest against our partiality for the ruling classes, may merely invert our history and have eyes only for what he regards as the depressed classes, whom he may

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represent as the victims of exploiters and may find it easy to equate with the whole society—forgetting that, to the historian, rich and poor alike are part victims and part agents in the whole historical process. Without this complete reversal, which produces a particular organization of our sympathies and interests, we might adopt the Marxian view of history—even the view that all history is a class-struggle—and still be open at the end of our studies to take one side or the other in present-day disputes. Bourgeois history by a similar process can be conservative as well as whig, and admits of those who uphold authority as well as those who are advocates of liberty. Whatever may be the advantages of the Marxian approach to history, it must remain fundamentally true that our hopes for the future will depend on our philosophy and our values, and all our prophecies for the future will depend primarily on our diagnosis of the state of the world to-day. We could not consent to follow the Marxist in this example of over-emphasis; or to accept any corollary to his theory which may put historical study at the service of one party. And in fact there is no reason why the Marxian view of history, as it is described above and as it is defended by its present-day exponents, should not assist the development of a conservatism more enlightened by being freed from traditional historical forms.

The general view that history is the story of the class-struggle may not be more pleasing than the view that it is the story of ideas; but we must not forget that many people see history as the conflict between liberty and authority, and perhaps a Catholic might regard it as the fight between the Church and the World. It would need a cold abstraction, a great refinement of the mind, to think of the course of history and see no issue at all. Those who conceive their own present in terms of issues such as these, will not find it easy to avoid carrying the pattern and the ideas back into their history; and whether their aspiration is the class-less state, the reign of freedom, the victory of the Church, or the triumph of the League of Nations, historians will hardly realize the subtle ways in which they may slip into propaganda. Any of these theses, crudely held, may produce mere vulgar simplifications of history; but a scientific historian, though believing them profoundly, would produce a history in which they were qualified and greatly overlaid. And sometimes we do not recognize the

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propaganda unless it is propaganda with which we disagree. Marxian, Bourgeois and Catholic interpretations—taking now the word interpretation in its wider and more popular sense—occupy in this respect positions which, if not equal, are at any rate analogous; they construe the past in terms of the present as they conceive it, and they carry into history the issues and obsessions of their own contemporary world. But if it is allowable or unavoidable that men should see the past with the eyes of the present, then at least there is ground for asserting that the contemporary world from which we take our start should be really ours and really contemporary, not a world that was contemporary with our grandfathers; and perhaps we might realize some danger to our minds if it should transpire that we were accepting and handing down a sort of traditional historian's present—starting where old history-books had started, instead of reconsidering the situation again. It is here that the Marxian system makes a further claim against bourgeois history—that it does not start from an old 'present' made traditional by the continuity of historical studies over a long period, but writes history over again with reference to the living world of to-day.

There is a view of history which I believe we must hold whether we are Marxists or not, but which I think will help us to place the Marxian interpretation, as we are now considering it, in its proper light. The view that I mean is expressed by the thesis that the process of learning history is always the process of unlearning the history that we knew before; and that an interpretation of history is a thing which we start with and then proceed forever in a certain sense to unlearn. Every step of historical understanding is therefore a process of self-revision; and at the lowest we have to eliminate the thousand fallacies which assume that the past is like the present-day. Taking one point of view we may roughly say that we study the Renaissance by first learning that there was one; after this it may be brought to our minds that in reality there was no such thing as a Renaissance at all; finally we may see that in spite of everything there was one, but not in the way we had first imagined—and so we go on forever finding friction with the concepts we have hitherto held. The habit of these constant reshufflings gives our minds that elasticity

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which is the first condition of historical-mindedness. And in this way the history we learn at school comes to upset a childhood's legend; and this school-history, so thoroughly bourgeois, we somewhat qualify and partly unlearn at the university. Only, with the majority of us at any rate, it must be said that we never quite unlearn.

Now it is the fault of much of our criticism of the Marxists that we tend to compare the Marxian interpretation with scientific history in the most refined sense of the words, when in reality we ought to compare it with the bourgeois interpretation from which we take our start. For us as for them scientific history only lies at the end of the road—it is the reward of a long chastening, it is the drastic re-visualization of the formulæ with which we began. We ought to bear in mind that, at the end of the long process of self-revision, the Marxian historian, who, we may be sure, will still carry on the work of research, will have overlaid his original thesis with a thousand complications in detail; just as a whig historian can go on tacking and compromising till he is recognizable as a whig no more. Bourgeois historians, having qualified their theses, seem sometimes almost to have learned something from the Marxists; and similarly the Marxists, when they write their history, make what we might imagine to be concessions to our point of view. And at their highest, Marxist and Whig will end by laying out very much the same piece of detailed history on a given subject—though they will speak in different terminology and move in a different order of ideas. It would be wrong to imagine that it is only the bourgeois system that can refine itself into what we call scientific history. For in the end both Marxist and Bourgeois must learn that the interpretation which they regarded as the verdict of history was itself neither more nor less than an assumption which they brought to their study of history; they must learn that in our interpretation of history we begin under the tyranny of our own present.

But if it should be argued that it does not matter with what interpretation of history we choose to begin—since an interpretation is a thing to be unlearned and scientific history resolves everything into detail—there are three answers to this objection, three reasons why, so long as history is widely taught, the interpretation which we choose to adopt is a matter of general

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importance. Firstly, though there is no question of denouncing scientific history as a pretence or as a piece of bourgeois artifice, this history does become incredibly bourgeois the moment it is abridged. Every text-book bears the evidence that when we abridge we do this work on a certain pattern and in a certain order of ideas; we are making assumptions and evaluations when we are choosing even what to take as the landmarks in the story. Secondly, there is the argument which Dobb employs—an argument to which I do not know the answer—that the scientific historian never really escapes from his traditional assumptions, though the point may not greatly matter within a piece of microscopic research. In other words we may qualify our bourgeois interpretation, but, however much we qualify, we never really abandon it. Finally there is the fact that in any event we do not all become scientific historians; we do not all get to the end of that process of unlearning our bourgeois legend; and perhaps the scientific historian is only scientific within the detail of some restricted field. So some of us are left in mid-air with what the Marxist would call archaic ideologies that do not satisfy our minds. Ideas which have long been out-moded may be tucked within the folds of our history, lurking in our text-book terminology and combining to direct the organization of our scheme. If it is true that we cast our history in old forms—after traditional valuations—then when we do return to the world of the present it will be with a discrepancy in our minds; and without knowing what is the matter with us we shall be at cross-purposes with the world—trying to formulate our own present in terms which are in no ways commensurate with it. If it is true that we come to history as though the 19th century were still our present, and if it is true that the Marxist takes his start from a later present and a less traditional analysis of it, then the Marxian theories under discussion may provide the very rejuvenation of history. And, though there is no subject on which we ought to move with greater humility of mind, we should be wrong to overlook the truth that if history may or must be allowed to have reference to the present, then, in so far as issues change and events demand a new shaping of our minds, each generation must re-write, or at least mentally reorganize, history for itself.

H. BUTTERFIELD.

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NOTES ON COMEDY

I

LABOUR-SAVING devices are common in criticism. Like the goods advertized in women's journals they do the work, or appear to do it, leaving the mind free for the more narcotic forms of enjoyment. Generalizations and formulæ are devices of this kind. It is as easy and unprofitable to discuss the 'essence' of the tragic and the comic modes as it is to conduct investigations in æsthetics which end with the discovery of Significant Form.

Comedy has provided a happy hunting ground for the generalizers. It is almost impossible to read a particular comedy without the interference of critical presuppositions derived from one or other of those who have sought to define Comedy in the abstract. In the first place, we all know that Comedy makes us laugh. 'Tragedy and comedy bear the same relation to one another as earnestness and mirth. Both these states of mind bear the stamp of our common nature but earnestness belongs more to the moral, and mirth to the sensual side. . . The essence of the comic is mirth.' Put in this form the error is sufficiently obvious, but it lurks behind most of our generalizations about the nature of the Comic and the function of Comedy. Meredith's hypergelasts are enemies of the Comic spirit, but his ideal audience all laugh, in their polite drawing-room way. 'The test of true Comedy,' he says, 'is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.'

Once an invariable connection between Comedy and laughter is assumed we are not likely to make any observations that will be useful as criticism. We have only to find the formula that will explain laughter and we know the 'secret' of Jonson and Rabelais, Chaucer and Fielding, Jane Austen and Joyce. 'Men have been wise in very different modes; but they have always laughed the same way.' So if we are looking for a simple explanation we can refer to 'a sudden glory,' 'incongruity,' 'the mechanical encrusted on the living,' 'tendency wit,' or any of the

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other half dozen solutions of the problem of laughter,[1] none of which however will help us to become better, because more responsive, readers of Molière. There is evidence on the other hand that reading capacity is diminished by reliance upon any one of them. But it is time to clear away this particular obstruction. A neglected passage of *Timber* reads: 'Nor is the moving of laughter always the end of Comedy . . . This is truly leaping from the Stage, to the Tumbrell again, reducing all wit to the original Dungcart.' Comedy is essentially a serious activity.

After this particularly vulgar error the most common is that Comedy is a Social Corrective, comic laughter a medicine administered to Society to cure its aberrations from the norm of Good Sense. Meredith's celebrated essay, in which this theory is embedded, has been a misfortune for criticism. It has won eminence as a classic without even the merit of containing a sharply-defined falsehood. The style is that of an inaugural lecture in a school of *belles lettres*. The idle pose is betrayed by the key-words—'high fellowship,' 'the smile finely tempered,' 'unrivalled politeness,' 'a citizen of the selecter world,'—and the theory emerges obscurely from the affected prose. 'The comic poet is in the narrow field, or enclosed square, of the society he depicts';—a commonplace as true of any representational art as it is of Comedy—'and he addresses the still narrower enclosure of men's intellects,'—the implication is false; there is emotion in Jonson and Molière—'with reference to the operation of the social world upon their characters.' With the aid of what has gone before we can make out the meaning. Comedy is 'the firstborn of common-sense.' 'It springs to vindicate reason, common-sense, rightness and justice,' and this Sir Galahad of the arts springs to attack whenever men 'wax out of proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hood-winked, given to run riot in idolatries . . . planning shortsightedly, plotting dementedly.' There is nothing that can be said of such a theory except that it is of no use whatever in elucidating particular comedies and in forming

[1] *The Nature of Laughter* by J. C. Gregory shows the variety of responses that may be covered by laughter, the one constant factor being a 'relief-feeling.'

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precise judgments. But it has the ill effect of providing the illusion that we know all that is necessary about a comedy when we know very little. 'The Comic Idea enclosed in a comedy makes it more generally perceptible and portable, which is an advantage.' Exactly; there is no need to distinguish between the comedy of *Tom Jones* and *The Secret Agent* when we have this Comic Idea to carry around with us.

In Meredith's Essay we hear much of 'the mind hovering above congregated men and women' and we learn that the author was in love with Millamant, but if we look for particular judgments we find: 'the comic of Jonson is a scholar's excogitation of the comic . . . Shakespeare is a well-spring of characters which are saturated with the comic spirit . . . they are of this world, but they are of the world enlarged to our embrace by imagination, and by great poetic imagination. They are, as it were, . . . creatures of the woods and wilds . . . Jacques, Falstaff and his regiment, the varied troop of Clowns, Malvolio, Sir Hugh Evans and Fluellen —marvellous Welshmen!—Benedick and Beatrice, Dogberry and the rest, are subjects of a special study in the poetically comic.' None of which helps us at all in understanding *Volpone* or *Henry IV*. We are not surprised when we find: 'O for a breath of Aristophanes, Rabelais, Voltaire, Cervantes, Fielding, Molière!' as though these diverse writers had the same literary problems or solved them in the same way.

Profitless generalizations are more frequent in criticism of Comedy than in criticism of other forms of literature. Since we continue to speak of the Comic Spirit after we have ceased to speak of the spirit of tragedy or the essence of the epic that bogus entity may be held responsible. 'It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half tension.

Meredith's Essay serves as a warning that Essays on Comedy are necessarily barren exercises. The point is brought home if we consider how profitless it would be to compare one of Blake's Songs of Experience with a poem of Hopkins as Manifestations of the Lyric Impulse. As in all criticism the only generalizations which may be useful are those, usually short, based on sensitive experience of literature, containing, as it were, the distilled essence of experience, capable of unfolding their meaning in

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particular application, and those which suggest how the mind works in certain classes of experience. Of the latter kind one of the most fruitful occurs on p. 209 of *Principles of Literary Criticism*. 'Besides the experiences which result from the building up of connected attitudes, there are those produced by the breaking down of some attitude which is a clog and a bar to other activities.' The breaking down of undesirable attitudes is normally part of the total response to a Comedy.[1] But to say this is to admit that all the work remains to be done in each particular case. We have to determine exactly how this breaking down is effected, exactly what attitude is broken down, and what takes its place.

Apply Dr. Richards' remark, with the necessary qualifications in each case, to *Volpone* and *Le Misanthrope*, and it is apparent how divergent the effects and methods of comedy may be. Jonson is concerned to create the mood which is the object of contemplation.[2] He works by selection, distortion and concentration, so that the attitude created by the interaction of Volpone, Corvino, Corbaccio and the rest finally, as it were, blows itself up by internal pressure. The method is cumulative.

> Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!
> Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.
> Hail the world's soul, and mine!

The exaggeration reaches a climax in the attempted seduction of Celia:

> See here, a rope of pearl; and each more orient
> Than the brave Ægyptian queen caroused:
> Dissolve and drink them. See, a carbuncle,
> May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark;
> A diamond would have bought Lollia Paulina,
> When she came in like star-light, hid with jewels.

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[1]If this is accepted we see the connexion between comedy and satire, wit, and irony. The possible connexion with laughter springing from a 'relief situation' is also apparent. [2]It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the best critical approach to Jonson is by way of Mr. T. S. Eliot's short essay in *The Sacred Wood*.

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The world thus created, already undermined by the obscene songs and antics of the Dwarf, the Eunuch and the Hermaphrodite, is demolished by the plots and counterplots of the final scenes. But the catastrophe is not mechanical: it represents on the plane of action the dissolution that is inherent in the swelling speeches of Volpone and Mosca:

> I fear I shall begin to grow in love
> With my dear self, and my most prosperous parts,
> They do so spring and burgeon ; I can feel
> A whimsy in my blood: I know not how,
> Success hath made me wanton.

In *Volpone* the cathartic effect is relevant solely to the conditions of the play. Molière, on the other hand, is more directly satiric, drawing more directly upon the actual world for the attitudes which he refines and demolishes. The play is a pattern of varied satiric effects. How it works may be best discovered by comparing it with a direct satire such as the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. The pitch and tempo of Pope's poem vary but the tone is fairly consistent. In *Le Misanthrope* on the other hand the tone varies not only from character to character, but also within the limits of a single speech, of a few lines ; and the speed with which the point of view shifts and the tone changes sets free the activity which breaks down the impeding attitudes. This is to confine our attention merely to one aspect of the play, but no criticism can be relevant which does not consider the peculiar mental agility required to follow the changes of this kind. Unlike *Volpone* the effects are repetitive (in kind, they are obviously not all the same) and a close examination of the tone and intention of each line in the first scene is the best way of discovering how the play as a whole should be read. Even to discover the points at which the author might be identified with the speaker is instructive.

It is obvious that the Social Corrective theory not only precludes discussion of a comedy in terms of the effects we have described but prevents those who accept it from even realizing that such discussion is possible. Its vicious inadequacy should be no less plain even if we admit, for the moment, that the function of comedy is 'critical.' Malvolio, Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, Squire Western may be considered simply as failures judged by some social norm, but in

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many comedies the 'criticism' is directed not only at the man who fails to live up to standard but also at the standard by which his failure is judged. In Shirley's *Love in a Maze* Sir Gervase Simple, reproached that he is dumb in the presence of his mistress, replies, 'I cannot help it: I was a gentleman, thou knowest, but t'other day. I have yet but a few compliments: within a while I shall get more impudence, and then have at her.' Here the object of criticism is not only the simpleton who has no court manners but also the courtiers, acquaintance with whom he hopes will fill him with unmannerly boldness. The method of two-edged satire may be studied in some of the effects of Rabelais and Cervantes. It is of particular importance in a consideration of literature in relation to the social environment. Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* may serve as an example. Part of the play is concerned with a wife, who, after expressing her horror of second marriages, yields to the first stranger who makes love to her on the, supposed, death of her husband, the stranger being her husband in disguise. The critics have seen here a satire on the frailty of woman, speaking of the 'almost brutal cynicism' of the play. But the satire is directed not only at such frailty but at the contemporary attitude towards widowhood. 'He that hath her,' said Overbury of a remarried widow, 'is but lord of a filthy purchase,' and a minor moralist writes with approval of widows who have lived alone as they ought: 'Their rooms bore the habit of mourning; funeral lamps were ever burning; no musical strain to delight the ear, no object of state to surprise the eye. True sorrow had there his mansion; nor could they affect any other discourse than what to their husbands' actions held most relation.' The effect of the play is to cast doubts on the reasonableness of such an attitude. The speech in praise of the horn at the end of *All Fools* may be considered in relation to 17th century marriage customs and cuckoldry. But the method is relevant when we are discussing plays, etc., as social documents rather than as literature independent of temporary conditions for their effect.

'Social Satire' is too vague and general to be of any use for the purpose of criticism. It needs to be defined in each instance in terms of the mental processes involved. The greatness of any comedy can only be determined by the inclusiveness, the coherence and stability of the resultant attitude; to define its method is the

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work of detailed and particular analysis, and abstract theories of Comedy can at best only amuse. An examination of *Henry IV* will help to make this plain.

II

Henry IV does not fit easily into any of the critical schemata, though 'incongruity' has served the critics in good stead. But at any rate since the time of Morgann, Falstaff has received a degree of sympathetic attention (how we love the fat rascal!) that distorts Shakespeare's intention in writing the two plays. We regard them as a sandwich—so much dry bread to be bitten through before we come to the meaty Falstaff, although we try to believe that 'the heroic and serious part is not inferior to the comic and farcical.' Actually each play is a unity, sub-plot and main plot co-operating to express the vision which is projected into the form of the play. And this vision, like that of all the great writers of comedy, is pre-eminently serious. It is symptomatic that Hazlitt, defending Shakespeare's tragedies against the comedies, says, 'He was greatest in what was greatest; and his *forte* was not trifling.'

The first speech of the King deserves careful attention. The brittle verse suggests the precarious poise of the usurper:

> So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
> Find we a time for frighted peace to pant,
> And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
> To be commenced in stronds afar remote.

The violence of the negative which follows suggests its opposite:

> No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
> Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood:
> No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
> Nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs
> Of hostile paces.

'Thirsty' contains the implication that the earth is eager for more blood; and when the prophecy of peace ends with the lisping line 'Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks' we do

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not need a previous knowledge of the plot or of history to realize that Henry is actually describing what is to come. The account of the proposed crusade is satiric:

> But this our purpose is a twelvemonth old, . . .
> Therefore we meet not now.

Throughout we are never allowed to forget that Henry is a usurper. We are given four separate accounts of how he gained the throne—by Hotspur (I. iii. 160-186), by Henry himself (III. ii. 39-84), by Hotspur again (IV. iii. 52-92), and by Worcester (V. i. 32-71). He gained it by 'murd'rous subornation,' by hypocrisy, his 'seeming brow of justice,' by 'violation of all faith and troth.' Words expressing underhand dealing occur even in the King's account to his son:

> And then I stole all courtesy from Heaven,
> And dress'd myself in such humility
> That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts.

There is irony is the couplet that concludes the play:

> And since this business *so fair* is done,
> Let us not leave till all *our own* be won.

The rebels of course are no better. The hilarious scene in which the plot is hatched (I. iii. 187-302) does not engage much sympathy for the plotters, who later squabble over the expected booty like any long-staff sixpenny strikers. Their cause does not bear prying into by 'the eye of reason' (IV. i. 69-72), and Worcester, for his own purposes, conceals 'the liberal kind offer of the King' (V. ii. 1-25). But this is relatively unimportant, there is no need to take sides and 'like Hotspur somewhat better than the Prince because he is unfortunate.' The satire is general, directed against statecraft and warfare. Hotspur is the chief representative of chivalry, and we have only to read his speeches to understand Shakespeare's attitude towards 'honour'; there is no need to turn to Falstaff's famous soliloquy. The description of the Mortimer-Glendower fight has just that degree of exaggeration that is necessary for not too obvious burlesque, though oddly enough it has been used to show that Hotspur 'has the imagination of a poet.'

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But if the image of the Severn—

> Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
> Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
> And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank—

is not sufficient indication the rhyme announces the burlesque intention:

> He did confound the best part of an hour
> In changing hardiment with great Glendower.

There is the same exaggeration in later speeches of Worcester and Hotspur; Hotspur's 'huffing part'—'By Heaven methinks it were an easy leap'—did not need Beaumont's satire. In the battle scene the heroics of 'Now, Esperance! Percy! and set on,' the chivalric embrace and flourish of trumpets are immediately followed by the exposure of a military dodge for the preservation of the King's life. 'The King hath many marching in his coats.'—'Another King! they grow like Hydra's heads.'

The reverberations of the sub-plot also help to determine our attitude towards the main action. The conspiracy of the Percys is sandwiched between the preparation for the Gadshill plot and counter-plot and its execution. Poins has 'lost much honour' that he did not see the 'action' of the Prince with the drawers. When we see the Court we remember Falstaff's jointstool throne and his account of Henry's hanging lip. Hotspur's pride in himself and his associates ('Is there not my father, my uncle and myself?') is parodied by Gadshill: 'I am joined with no foot land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers . . . but with nobility and tranquility, burgomasters and great oneyers.' The nobles, like the roarers, prey on the commonwealth, 'for they ride up and down on her and make her their boots.'

The Falstaff attitude is therefore in solution, as it were, throughout the play, even when he is not on the stage; but it takes explicit form in the person and speeches of Sir John. We see an heroic legend in process of growth in the account of his fight with the men in buckram. The satire in the description of his ragged regiment is pointed by a special emphasis on military terms—'soldiers,' 'captain,' 'lieutenant,'

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'ancients, corporals . . . gentlemen of companies.' His realism easily reduces Honour to 'a mere scutcheon.' Prince Henry's duel with Hotspur is accompanied by the mockery of the Douglas-Falstaff fight, which ends with the dead and the counterfeit dead lying side by side. If we can rid ourselves of our realistic illusions and their accompanying moral qualms we realize how appropriate it is that Falstaff should rise to stab Hotspur's body and carry him off as his luggage on his back.

The satire on warfare, the Falstaff attitude, implies an axis of reference, which is of course found in the gross and vigorous life of the body. We find throughout the play a peculiar insistence on imagery deriving from the body, on descriptions of death in its more gruesome forms, on stabbing, cutting, bruising and the like. We expect to find references to blood and death in a play dealing with civil war, but such references in *Henry IV* are of a kind not found in a war play such as *Henry V*. In the first scene we hear of the earth 'daubing her lips with her own children's blood.' War is 'trenching,' it 'channels' the fields and 'bruises' the flowers. 'The edge of war' is 'like an ill-sheathed knife' which 'cuts his master.' Civil war is an 'intestinal shock,' and battles are 'butchery.' We learn that the defeated Scots lay 'balk'd in their own blood,' and that 'beastly shameless transformation' was done by the Welsh upon the corpses of Mortimer's soldiers. Later Hotspur mentions the smell of 'a slovenly unhandsome corpse,' and we hear of Mortimer's 'mouthed wounds.' So throughout the play. The dead Blunt lies 'grinning,' Hotspur's face is 'mangled,' and Falstaff lies by him 'in blood.' Falstaff's 'honour' soliloquy insists on surgery, on broken legs and arms.

To all this Falstaff, a walking symbol, is of course opposed. 'To shed my dear blood drop by drop i' the dust' for the sake of honour appears an imbecile ambition. Falstaff will 'fight no longer than he sees reason.' His philosophy is summed up when he has escaped Douglas by counterfeiting death: 'S'blood! 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: to die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed.' The same thought is implicit in the honour soliloquy.

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Once the play is read as a whole the satire on war and policy is apparent. It is useful to compare the first part of *Henry IV* with *King John* in estimating the development of Shakespeare's dramatic power. *King John* turns on a single pivotal point—the Bastard's speech on Commodity, but the whole of the later play is impregnated with satire which crystallises in Falstaff. Now satire implies a standard, and in *Henry IV* the validity of the standard itself is questioned; hence the peculiar coherence and universality of the play. 'Honour' and 'state-craft' are set in opposition to the natural life of the body, but the chief body of the play is, explicitly, 'a bolting-hutch of beastliness.'—'A pox on this gout! or a gout on this pox, I should say.' Other speeches reinforce the age and disease theme which, it has not been observed, is a significant part of the Falstaff theme. Hotspur pictures the earth as an 'old beldam'

> pinch'd and vex'd
> By the imprisoning of unruly wind
> Within her womb.

Again, he says

> The time of life is short;
> To spend that shortness basely were too long,
> If life did ride upon a dial's point,
> Still ending at the arrival of an hour.

The last two lines imply that no 'if' is necessary; life does 'ride upon a dial's point,' and Hotspur's final speech takes up the theme of transitoriness:

> But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool:
> And time, that takes survey of all the world,
> Must have a stop.

There is no need to emphasise the disease aspect of Falstaff (Bardolph's bad liver is not merely funny). He 'owes God a death.' He and his regiment are 'mortal men.' It is important to realize however that when Falstaff feigns death he is meant to appear actually as dead in the eyes of the audience; at least the idea of death is meant to be emphasized in connection with the Falstaff-

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idea at this point. No answer is required to the Prince's rhetorical question,

> What! old acquaintance! could not all this flesh
> Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!

The stability of our attitude after a successful reading of the first part of *Henry IV* is due to the fact that the breaking-down process referred to above is not simple but complex; one set of impulses is released for the expression of the Falstaff-outlook; but a set of opposite complementary impulses is also brought into play, producing an effect analogous to that caused by the presence of comedy in *King Lear*[1] (compare the use of irony in *Madame Bovary*). *Lear* is secure against ironical assault because of the irony it contains; *Henry IV* will bear the most serious ethical scrutiny because in it the serious is a fundamental part of the comic effect of the play.[2]

This summary treatment of a play which demands further elucidation on the lines suggested is, I think, sufficient to illustrate the main points of the notes on comedy which precede it. No theory of comedy can explain the play; no theory of comedy will help us to read it more adequately. Only a morbid pedantry would be blind to the function of laughter in comedy, but concentration upon laughter leads to a double error: the dilettante critic falls before the hallucination of the Comic Spirit, the more scientifically-minded persuade themselves that the jokes collected by Bergson and Freud have something to do with the practice of literary criticism.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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[1]See the admirable essay on 'Lear and the Comedy of the Grotesque' in *The Wheel of Fire* by G. Wilson Knight. [2]The second part of *Henry IV* is no less interesting, though less successful, I think, as a play. No one has yet pointed out that drunkenness, lechery and senile depravity (in II, iv for example) are *not* treated by Shakespeare with 'goodnatured tolerance.' Shakespeare's attitude towards his characters in *2 Henry IV* at times approaches the attitude of Mr. Eliot towards Doris, Wauchope, etc., in *Sweeney Agonistes*. Northumberland's monody on death (I, i) needs to be studied in order to understand the tone of the play.

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ENGLISH WORK IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

IN this essay I have found is necessary to make various assumptions that could be supported by arguments, but chiefly only of the wearisome statistical kind ; in so far as the result interests readers, presumably they will be either connected with teaching English, or with Public Schools and would be familiar with much that I put forward if I dealt with any matter in detail, so that I begin with the tabulation of certain principles, trusting the reader to excuse an apparent dogmatism that is merely due to the desire to avoid needless expansion.

(1) The general object of education, domestic or scholastic, is to promote the growth of an intelligence, free to apply itself to the maximum of problems.

(2) The chief enemy of intelligence is the repressed complex in which feelings, denied a natural outlet, and unrecognized, force the whole man to act in terms of a part. Instinct recognizes likenesses ; intelligence discriminates, and is creative, whereas instinct is reproductive.

(3) The subjects of instruction in a school are educational vehicles only. The master's concern is to discover a technique that will both instruct and educate. Life is the only subject of education.

(4) A Public School is a reservation for adolescent boys, where they can live by adolescent standards.

(5) Critical standards are the object of English studies. This is the intellectual counterpart of (1), which includes behaviour.

The purpose of this essay is to consider how the peculiarities of the Public School affect English work in the above sense, and it will be obvious at once that the close relation between (1) and (5) means that one is really discussing much more than a subject in the curriculum, for only the mind free of inhibitions is capable of objective criticism.

The peculiar principle of the Public School, that boys and masters live in it, produces various results ; it is an expensive,

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and therefore socially restricted world, but balances this defect by its freedom from parochialism; the boys gain by meeting others from all over the country, and indeed from all over the world, and the staff by the absence of a governing body of local magnates. It promotes closer relations between boys and masters than a day-school, the master standing in *loco parentis* to the boy and the two being thrown together in various activities out of school.

So far the peculiarities are, on balance, good, and offer the master opportunities for useful work, but there is a very serious drawback to consider.

The boy has to live his whole life in the school, and the school is responsible to his parents for his safety and to the community for his conduct, throughout the term, day and night. The legal responsibility of the school is very vaguely defined and the consequences of even a single escapade or accident may be extremely serious for the school once the matter receives publicity. It is a real difficulty and deserves sympathetic consideration; it is not surprising that a Headmaster should have remarked to me about this, 'I want to know what any given boy is doing at any given moment,' for it is quite certain that juries expect this of headmasters. But, educationally, the consequences are serious, for this has led to the canalization of activities out of school and therewith to a mental attitude towards all activity that is narrow, formal and sterile.

The old methods were simple; boys were locked up for a large part of the time and bullied into some kind of order for the rest. The violent alternations of licence and submission that resulted gave us the picturesque mutinies, sometimes only quelled by soldiers, that have now passed away. Organized games provided the remedy, of course, and in view of the great improvement in school life no one can dispute their value. The civilization of school life was the first necessity for it to become educationally good; prefects and games did much to achieve it. What is not generally realized, however, about games is this: boys have always enjoyed and taken plenty of vigorous exercise, organized or not, and the real value to the school's system was not that the boys were playing games, but that they were occupied, under control. The transmutation of this system into a moral code of things 'done,' or 'not done,' is easy.

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Finally, there is the effect of residence in a school upon the master. The boy is passing through a natural homosexual phase of development; the environment for the master is not natural. It is inherently probable that the master will be regressive—a frozen adolescent seeking his natural milieu, the bosom of his Alma Mater or her substitute. He prefers the respectful and undiscriminating affection of the boy to the risk of meeting a woman on equal terms. It is not, of course, always so, but it is very frequently so, and since such a regression implies the acceptance of a fantasy world, it is not surprising that the whole outlook should become unreal; it does—the school seems more important than the world, because it is the shelter of an essentially timorous nature.

I cannot forbear to illustrate unreality of this sort by quoting from a critique of my first article in *Scrutiny;* it is culled from the *Journal of Education.* I had devoted a few lines in a long article to the importance of a boy's sex-education and drew a criticism, reeking with sex, indeed noticing little else, in which the writer said, 'The form-master or house-master is not the right person to deal with puberty; it should be left to the school doctor, or, better, the family doctor. Untold harm may be done by inexperienced hands; a watch should be mended by a watchmaker.' The exquisite logic of the analogy, which would imply either that puberty is a breakdown of the machine or that only doctors 'make' sexual apparatus, or indeed what else absurd, can pass as mere stupidity. The timid childishness of it is what really calls for notice; one can quite understand a boy's uneasiness at the phenomena of puberty, but an adult should not regard sex as disease. After all, country yokels and even primitive tribesmen manage to instruct their sons sufficiently, decently, and effectively. Shall an educated man be incapable of doing so? Must he run to Nurse?

The conjunction of a system securing discipline by wasting time with masters who habitually evade responsibility is sinister, and it is not surprising that there should be a general lack of critical standards among the men teaching English, the vast majority of whom believe in poetry as an anodyne to serious thought, and hold that *The Lady of Shallott, Innisfree,* and similar works are the height of poetry; this self-regarding, self-pitying

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kind of romanticism is to creative thought as masturbation is to procreation ; but it is implicit, in every school book on the subject I know, that it is the true poetic. The results are to be seen in anthologies of school verse, for one of the natural consequences of a boy's fear to enter the school is a fantasy life on paper, and if a master, himself regressive, encourages the idea, it does much to prevent the boy from psychological growth.

Until the time when some headmaster ensures that his masters are not merely adults manqués and has the courage to build his curriculum on realities, it may be asked, what can be done with English?

In the first place, the English master can observe the boy's mind, and especially that of the 'misfit,' and can apply real standards to his poetry. Probably the ultimate result will be thoughtful prose, for if I can define a man's poetry as what he makes of life, that is the most that all but a very few will want to write. The 'misfit' may be too big or too little for his place, and in the overwhelming majority of instances the school-poet is merely inadequate to being a schoolboy, because of a family fixation ; his poetry is compensatory fantasy, and its imagery and themes, usually pretty naïve, reveal its nature. Tactful handling of it can lead to a re-association of ideas that will help the boy considerably: such work, however, requires great patience and takes up a lot of time, and more can be done by a general policy of constructive criticism.

There are no doubt many ways of setting about the business, but I conceive that the first essential is that the boys shall know that the master is not afraid of the truth ; if he can be scared or put out by, say, a sexual idea he cannot hope to do much, for he will never give boys the confidence to overcome their childish fears if his evasions show his own. For this reason he may gain by submitting himself to analysis, so that he can be sure of himself in any circumstances ; self-analysis is seldom adequate in view of his probable psychology, and is likely to miss serious important sore spots.

Given self-control, however learned, the first object in teaching would seem to be to establish clear distinctions between feeling and thinking, and between the emotional and logical meanings of words. There are many interesting ways of doing this, such as

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rewriting a neutral police description to give a favourable or unfavourable impression of a man's appearance, rewriting a wartime account of a German defeat for German consumption, and so on ; in each case the structure must not be altered and the object is to distinguish between synonyms emotionally. Passages of verse can be rewritten, the emotionally coloured words being replaced by colourless ones, and similar exercises suggest themselves, their purpose being the clear presentation of the difference between objective and subjective statement.

Such a system, pursued further, might do no more than establish a self-contained logical machine that the boy would not apply to his business of living ; mathematics can produce this kind of abstract logicality and it can be consistent with, and indeed balanced by, a complete lack of practicality. The danger of this is easily avoided once realized, and the material has none of the abstract quality of that used in mathematical work.

From this elementary stage one can progress to criticism of poetry fairly easily by way of studying a cruder form of emotional statement that the boy is not afraid to criticize—advertisements. These cover the whole emotional range and lead very naturally to discussion of intelligence and its obstacles ; the magazine story, designed for the same public as the advertisements, takes the process a step further, and brings one to the whole crux of the matter, the difference between poetry of escape and creative poetry.

Such is a very rough outline of a progressive course that aims at facilitating psychological growth and building confidence in the boy's own power to criticize ; I need not trouble readers with the details. Clearly it would be equally usable in a day-school, but there are special points about its use in a boarding school that deserve attention.

The first is that the great weakness of the Public School is the number of boys who are 'frozen' soon after arrival ; that is, they are so anxious to 'do the right thing' and to escape isolation by conformity that they grow a hard protective shell modelled on their view at that time of what a Public Schoolboy is—and within that mould they stay. It is really a problem of loneliness, quite different from the normal problem of the day-boy alternating between two lives. Work of this kind shows the boy that he

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can criticize and have standards of his own ; I am convinced of the general psychological value of such work when directed consciously to the conquest of an inferiority complex.

In the second place, various aspects of life are absent from the life of a Public School, and the artificiality of its conditions needs to be related consciously to actuality. The best way is the serious consideration of poetry, which endeavours to explain life.

But nothing could be worse than to adopt the attitude of the regressive person who values poetry as an escape from reality ; in his uncritical acceptance of sound instead of sense ('As some to Church repair, Not for the doctrine, but the music there'), if he does inspire a love of poetry he has merely taught sensuality—he might as well extol whiskey, swearing, or any other form of relieving sensual stresses. And by the examples of regressive poetry that he gives he is helping to fix the boy to the past instead of using his imagination to look forward ; there is all the difference between dreaming and seeing a vision. I presume that it would be a work of supererogation to explain what I mean by the difference between regressive and aggressive imagination. Any student of the emotional use of language, whether in the body of literature or in the dreams of neurotics, knows it. The boy, too, can know it, and can very easily recognize the difference between what he feels and what he thinks ; and a careful system designed to assist him to that knowledge will not only enable him to criticize poetry, but to live sanely and intelligently.

The poetry of remote Edens, fruitless flowers, and embowered Ladies of Shallott will not lose its value altogether, for he will consider what manner of man it expresses. There may be less verse written at schools, but poetry will stand a better chance of recognition.

The whole gist of the matter was expressed by Shakespeare when he spoke of imagination as 'bodying forth the forms of things unknown.' The imagination of the fearful 'bodies forth' the Unknown that they dare not face, a cycle of unresolved hesitations between desire and fear ; the aggressive imagination leaps forward to the future, confident, although it cannot know exactly what it holds in store, and expresses the whole, integrated man.

Are we to inculcate both as poetic?

MARTIN CRUSOE.

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WORDSWORTH AND PROFESSOR BABBITT

FOR a long time we have been aware of a curious anomaly in Professor Babbitt's criticism, and his latest book *On Being Creative,* written, as the publisher's announcement tells us, 'in lighter vein,' has only increased our dismay. Briefly, Mr. Babbitt takes his stand as a humanist and insists on the validity of the Aristotelian dictum that the end is more important than the means; yet in spite of this, he succeeds in writing in a style so highly emotive and provocative that the reader and Mr. Babbitt himself not only find it difficult to preserve a calm critical balance, but confuse ends and means continually, losing sight of the former in exasperation whenever one of Mr. Babbitt's aprioristic contentions is at stake. For instance it is typical of Mr. Babbitt's whole outlook that in his disdain for meddling psychology (his exclusion of the meddling psyche is at least as irrational as Wordsworth's of the 'meddling intellect,') his only consideration of so obvious an end as 'response' to a work of art should limit itself to the barest allusions to the Aristotelian 'katharsis' without explanation or application beyond telling us on one occasion that a certain interpretation of the term is wrong.

However, there is no need here to reveal all the fallacies in Mr. Babbitt's arguments; I wish rather to correct his reading of Wordsworth, although in his Wordsworth essay he should, if anywhere, be on firm ground. Mr. Babbitt begins by arguing against the genetic method, of which, he says, the biographical approach is part. He incriminates Professors Harper and Legouis for 'unearthing' the 'choice morsel' of the Annette Vallon episode, and particularly the latter for having allowed Annette to affect his 'enjoyment of one of the best sonnets in English ("It is a beauteous evening, calm and free")' because Wordsworth meant it 'not for his sister Dorothy as had hitherto been supposed, but for his natural daughter Caroline.' One may remark that any pompous complacency we may discover in the sonnet after our knowledge of Annette, may have been hidden only by the previous bad reading

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given to anthology pieces and by a sentimental response induced by just as irrelevant preconceptions moral or even—for mention of Dorothy seems to destroy Mr. Babbitt's argument at once—biographical. We must agree with Mr. Babbitt that biography is in any case secondary, but in dealing with Wordsworth he has not realized the issues which have always been at stake between the two types of Wordsworthian—the differences of interpretation given to his work from Shelley onwards—which make Annette of great value if only for purposes of argument. Professor Babbitt's own analysis indeed of the difference between Wordsworth's earlier and later poetry never goes deeper than such terms as 'poetically felicitious,' 'poetic inevitability,' etc., so that he avoids any consideration of an implicit meaning and is thus lead to the absurdity of concluding that 'criticism of life' is synonymous with systematic philosophy, and that Arnold's appreciation—although Arnold attempted to hide the fact—was the same as Leslie Stephen's. For consideration of Wordsworth's repudiation of his early life, the effect on his poetry, and the bearing which Annette has upon the question, making his attitude and the psychological effect of France more comprehensible, and showing Shelley's view of Wordsworth as 'a kind of moral eunuch' to be much more plausible than the Wordsworthians', I would refer the reader unacquainted with the problem to Clutton-Brock's essay 'The Problem of Wordsworth' and to the relevant chapter in *Shelley: the Man and the Poet*. I do not suggest Mr. Read's book because Professor Babbitt has dismissed him in the essay. Clutton-Brock's view, though not very different, is not open to Mr. Babbitt's particular objections, although it is only fair to say that I think many people, at all events students of Kretschmer, would be able to agree provisionally with Mr. Read's view, even as represented by Mr. Babbitt, and see no validity in the latter's objection, made, as it is, without realization of the issues involved.

In spite of Mr. Babbitt's ability to cite the most astonishing range of authors and critics, the actual quality of that reading is not, I think, very high. His statement of the social problem is sometimes just, but his analysis of literature is often so superficial—he can criticize Rousseau, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, *The Dynasts*, *Ulysses*, and Surrealism as if ultimately the difference between any responses they demand were negligible—that we may

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well question his ultimate conclusions as to the connection between literature and society. For one thing, in spite of citing M. Benda, he does not consider whether the 'clerks' were responsible or not for the state of affairs which made 'the great betrayal' possible—he sees no need to make any division in the 'reading public' which has presented a greater and greater problem from Coleridge onwards; we are thus led to assume, what obviously Mr. Babbitt himself assumes, that *Ulysses* effects in the reader the same kind of reaction to life as any best-seller.

But I will return to my own re-reading of the Wordsworth poems which Mr. Babbitt criticises:

> 'Perhaps no poet,' Mr. Babbitt says, 'ever saw life less dramatically than Wordsworth. The sonnet on London seen from Westminster Bridge is not only successful, it is splendidly successful. At the same time there is a certain element of paradox in treating a great city as a still life.'

Here again if Professor Babbitt had only troubled to analyse his reasons for liking the sonnet he would have discovered it was 'splendidly successful' *because* of the paradox, not, as he implies, *in spite* of it. Actually a more subtle thing than paradox—which we are apt to think of as something clever in a merely distracting way—this quality in Wordsworth has a power of suggesting by an implied contrast. 'Perhaps no poet ever saw life less dramatically than Wordsworth,' we admit, but it so happens that Mr. Babbitt has hit upon the most dramatic quality Wordsworth possessed: the power of seizing upon a moment of calm when action is vividly anticipated or remembered. The emphasis upon time and stillness in the Westminster Bridge sonnet is so exaggerated that, in our very attempt to preserve it in our imagination, the moment is lost and becomes unrealizable, and the city wakes into activity in our imagination. This was Mr. Babbitt's response, but he has been too astonished to realize it was the normal one—for the quality is sufficiently common in Wordsworth for us to assume it is intentional. For example in *To a Skylark* most effect depends upon the lines

> Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
> Those quivering wings composed, that music still.

where the moment of calm is chosen to suggest—this time in

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recollection—the song and flight of the bird. An actual description of that song and flight must have been a failure, just as an actual description of the city's awakening activity would have suggested far less than the Westminster Bridge sonnet succeeds in giving us by an exaggerated denial of that activity. At times the most undramatic events appear to Wordsworth in almost a dramatic light: even 'the unimaginable touch of Time' (in the last line of the sonnet on 'Mutability') which 'The tower sublime of yesterday' could not sustain, becomes, by the very denial in the word 'unimaginable,' almost perceptible, almost felt dramatically by the reader. It is the same 'element of paradox' which Mr. Babbitt refers to; but if paradox, it is of a peculiarly sublime kind. If this power we have described is not in itself dramatic, it at least supplies a sense of that moment when past experience can be most vividly seen in perspective and summed up in a word or phrase—a sense no dramatist can dispense with.

Some of Mr. Babbitt's humanist conclusions are supported by the very arguments and methods he attacks. For example he disparages psychology as it exists at present: 'On the pretext of being fully experimental the psychologist has come to be almost entirely concerned with the subrational and animal sides of human nature,' and later in the book he derides Taine's well-known remark 'sleep, madness, delirium, somnambulism, hallucination, offer a much more profitable field of experiment for the psychology of the individual than the normal state.' Thus the psychologist, lurking beneath this 'pretext of being fully experimental,' is really, according to Mr. Babbitt, conspiring in the insidious decentralizing attack on civilization of which the signs are to be found in every Romanticist from Rousseau onwards. We have already said that Mr. Babbitt is confident in his ability to reject his 'psyche' altogether; the will, for him, is all sufficient. But more critical humanists may be unwilling to leave disregarded a part of their nature whose power is unknown, and may see in Psychology a means of exploring and controlling what Mr. Babbitt leaves uncontrolled. After all we must remind Mr. Babbitt that the end is more important than means and the psychologists' general plea for a greater co-ordination must increase the power of the will. Dr. Havelock Ellis' insistence on personal moral responsibility in the final volume of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* is distinctly

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humanistic, we may remark, as are also the conclusions he reaches with regard to normal and subnormal states of mind in *The World of Dreams*. This last-mentioned book, too, contains a consideration of paramnesia which, if applied as criticism to the Romanticists (particularly Wordsworth), becomes exceedingly interesting—and from the humanist point of view. As far as we know, this application has never been fully developed although M. Cazamian has suggested the approach.[1]

As soon as it is stated it must be obvious that Wordsworth was subject to (a) agoraphobia and (b) certain disturbances of memory whose implications are easier to realize as soon as we accept the term 'paramnesia' and the psychologist's account of its symptoms. Wordsworth's description of himself as a child, 'many times while going to school I grasped at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to reality,' shows the early stages of what, as Mr. Babbitt says, developed into the typically Romantic capacity for wonder, which, in Wordsworth, sometimes invested an ordinary sight with 'visionary dreariness.' Let us state this differently and say that Wordsworth's account of himself as a boy shows that he was liable to extreme states of dizziness, peculiarly associated with open spaces, cliffs, lonely moors and so forth, so that we are justified in assuming that the condition was agoraphobia and definitely subnormal—the more so since the vivid revelationary nature of his experiences on these occasions was often associated with vague fear:

> I heard among the solitary hills
> Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
> Of undistinguishable motion, steps
> Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

And the famous passage which describes the frightening appearance of the mountain peak, while he was out rowing on the lake, occurs at once to one's mind. Particularly typical are those occasions when the expanse of sky is mentioned, not as something merely seen, but felt (that is, we have here an allusion to

[1]Legouis and Cazamian *History of English Literature* Bk. V, ch. i, in the English translation in one vol. p. 1030 and footnote.

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the 'sixth sense' Mr. Babbitt deplores), and felt as something oppressive or at least rather unearthly:

> While on the perilous ridge I hung alone
> With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
> Blow through my ear! *The sky seemed not a sky*
> *Of Earth,* and with what motion moved the clouds.

and, much more remarkable:

> . . . . then the calm
> And dead still water lay upon my mind
> Even with the weight of pleasure; and *the sky,*
> Never before so beautiful, *sank down*
> *Into my heart and held me like a dream.*

His theory of spontaneity prevented Wordsworth from discovering that this state was subnormal, in spite of its vague reminiscence of dream states. On the contrary, he felt at times that his experiences were not subrational but fully superrational. The transition from the merely surrealist—using the word for the moment like Mr. Babbitt as a term of abuse—to the superrational is clearly seen in the following:

> . . . . the whole body of the man did seem
> Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
> Or like a man from some far region sent
> To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

Where the implication would be obvious, even if there were no mention of God in the last stanza of the poem. The most interesting development of such a feeling is to be found, perhaps, in *Stepping Westward,* and there are so many similar passages among his best-known poetry that it would be easy to continue citing examples.

The mood is that discussed in the essay on Wordsworth in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. Bradley, it will be remembered, remarked that Wordsworth's trance-like visionary state often takes the form of a kind of desiderium to pass arbitrary boundaries and limits. Here it will appear at once that we are back

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again at Babbitt and his hatred of the primitivists who fuse themselves into infinity or 'Unendlichkeit.' For Wordsworth this fusion had the fascination of danger.

These visionary experiences have this in common: they put a high value on a state avowedly similar to the half-waking, half-sleeping state when dream and reality seem one, and when memory is seizing haphazardly events from our conscious life and those from our unconscious, and blending them without any sense of time. In this hypnogogic state the mind makes no selection: there is no will, merely 'spontaneity'; the most casual impression, retained only in the depth of the subconscious, may be given great prominence. There is no focus, only the loosest association. When one is waking from a dream, moreover, the scenes, however fantastic, are accepted as normal, and, however trivial seem important; it is thus the lowest, most discursive part of the brain which presents to the higher perceptions what they, devoid of will, must placidly accept.

Almost the same thing occurs in cases of paramnesia, or false recollection. According to Mr. Havelock Ellis, the impression of a scene is received through the usual channels of sense; but, if the mind is not alert, the unconscious mind receives the impression first; while the same impression, reaching the conscious perception later, creates an illusion of familiarity and revelational significance. It is precisely as if we dreamt of a scene and awoke to find it unexpectedly before our waking eyes. Then the reason, working amid material uncontrolled by the will—'spontaneous,' in fact—finally hits upon some explanation typically similar to conclusions reached in dream or hypnogogic states in that time is ignored. Since the paramnesiac state of mind is so similar to that of dreaming, it is scarcely surprising that a common explanation of its phenomena presumes some previous dream experience. Another explanation is that the person has visited the scene before and forgotten all about it; another that in sleep his spirit has travelled where he himself has not been, and another that he has visited the place in some previous existence. Whether an explanation is attempted or not, the experience is often one of startling vividness, but even this is sub- not supernormal. The hyperæsthesia involves no selection so that there is no justification for the belief that what is perceived is of the slightest real importance. In its

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lack of voluntary control, the state is definitely pathological and is reconcilable to the affinity felt by the extreme Romanticist for the idiot and madman.

The Romanticist reluctance to interfere with mental processes acted in this instance upon Wordsworth's slight agoraphobia and made these occasions when

> . . . Bodily eyes
> Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw
> Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
> A prospect in the mind . . .

and when there was a lack of any voluntary attention, fairly frequent. To ascribe Wordsworth's ' visionary power ' to paramnesia, which seems inevitable after the foregoing account, and to recognize this paramnesia as a definite subnormality, is to comprehend even those ' blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realized ' about which Wordsworth himself seems to be rather dubious, even while raising ' songs of thanks and praise ' for them. Paramnesia, moreover, with its common presumption of a previous existence, will account for the Pythagorean argument of the Immortality Ode as a whole.

The Romanticists often stumbled upon something valuable by their very lack of focus, just as a person who ceases to concentrate or who is even on the point of falling asleep, sometimes remembers something he has been trying vainly to recall for hours. This can hardly persuade anyone, however, that a preference for dreaming over waking will serve adequately for a general principle in life, and the fact that the psychologist emphasizes the subnormality of such inattention cannot be forgotten.

Several more of Wordsworth's recognized characteristics would immediately confirm our approach, and seem obviously explicable to abnormal psychology. Wordsworth's peculiar insistence on the sense of sight which often takes the place of all the other senses for him, supplying—with typical confusion (*vide The New Laokoon* passim)—what they would normally supply, finds simple analogy in the process of falling asleep, when, we are told, the sense of sight persists longest, and in the fact that the pictorial is by far the most vivid aspect of dreams. Mr. Havelock Ellis also supplies evidence in support of the view that param-

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nesia is particularly liable to occur in intellectual workers at the end of a tiring day. This may conceivably give added significance to the 'sensations sweet' Wordsworth specifically mentions as occurring in 'hours of weariness,' and it may also explain why Wordsworth wanted to include 'lassitudes' among various things whose modifying influence would appear to be much more obviously explicable as bearing

> . . . a needful part, in making up
> The calm existence that is mine when I
> Am worthy of myself.

It is rather necessary to insist upon this point: that a subnormal state similar to Wordsworth's is as liable to occur to the hard worker as to him who indulges in the Romantic sin of spiritual sloth. It is a real danger to the humanist who believes in the omnipotence of the will: the subconscious has this power of retaliation. It is precisely like the refusal of the mind to produce a forgotten word—when inattention *for the moment* may be of use. We have italicised the proviso since it suggests the possibility of blending the conscious and the subconscious but with the definite intention of keeping the conscious dominant. Mr. Babbitt would have us ignore the subconscious; but something has been done by the psychologists, and more can be done by individuals, to explore their subconsciouses, increase the conscious side of their minds, and thus, by better co-ordination, increase the sphere of the will also.

Too much reliance on 'spontaneity' may indeed be one danger; so much we may grant. But if the humanists go to the other extreme and ignore the subconscious entirely, humanism will undermine itself precisely as the tired intellect falls prone to subnormal illusion. There is so much uncritical abandonment that the more popular approach to the humanist standard can just as easily be a Romantic one—an extreme and unquestioning acceptance of outward rule as a universal panacea, to the exclusion of any thought of the individual will and effort Mr. Babbitt himself insists on. Mr. Babbitt's opponents are Romanticists, but it would not be surprising if his followers were Romanticists too—for he can be as easily misunderstood as Aristotle was in the Renaissance, and his 'standards' will not be as easily distinguishable

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from standardizations, when passed on to other hands. In the preface to *The New Laokoon,* many years ago, he defined his position more carefully and separated himself from the extremists, but now he has lost his poise. I think he deserves any misinterpretation he gets, his first-hand criticism is too careless, and the bare ability to see that there is something radically wrong with the way Western civilization approaches life is not enough.

We have said that one of the humanist dangers is that of being affected by the subconscious without knowing it, and thus losing proper co-ordination. Professor Babbitt has so played into our hands that he will have to admit this point: While reading *On Being Creative* for the first time I myself experienced the illusion of having seen the page before. But my first suspicion that I was suffering from paramnesia gave way to recognition of Arnold's argument at the beginning of *Essays in Criticism.* Mr. Babbitt was producing the plea for the right of the critic to be called 'creative,' challenging the ascendancy of inferior 'original' or 'creative' writing over the best criticism, and doing so in similar language to Arnold's, reproducing Arnold's argument stage by stage, and even offering one of the same examples—asking whether Johnson had done better in writing *Irene* or *Lives of the Poets.* There was no acknowledgment, so it was Mr. Babbitt who had been nodding, not I; for this essay of Arnold's, *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,* must have attracted Mr. Babbitt's continual and particular attention, yet at the time of writing he must have been ignorant of the subconscious roots of his ideas. With reference to certain French critics Mr. Babbitt makes the following remark, which seems to be true of himself also, and likely to be even truer of his followers:

> 'Rousseau would, as a matter of fact, have the right to say (in the words of Emerson's Brahma) of many of those who profess to be reacting from him: "When me they fly, I am the wings."'

ROY MORRELL.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

MR. PUNCH'S POLITICAL SUPPLEMENTS.

Mr. Leonard Woolf's useful pamphlet, *Hunting the Highbrow* (Hogarth Press) needs bringing up to date ; for the facetious denigration of art and the snarls of the vulgar (when discomforted) are now common in journals with a higher conventional reputation that the *Daily Express*. It is not enough, for instance, to dismiss *Punch* as merely dull and reactionary. Reactionary it always was, after its first twenty years ; from its support of the pro-slavery South to its behaviour in the war, when (as the introduction to the recent *Punch* anthology informs us) it 'never served its country better than . . . between the years 1914 and 1918,' *i.e.* by heightening the country's fighting temper and by assiduously pumping the stimulus of indignation, horror and hatred into the public mind (See Lord Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime,* Allen and Unwin, 2/6d.). But the younger *Punch* evinced a genuine comedic attitude and represented a social poise ; there might then be applied to it the now meaningless comparison with Aristophanes. *Punch* to-day exemplifies a modern tendency—the capitalizing of complacency, ignorance and irresponsibility by the complacent, ignorant and irresponsible. Its humour, for instance, is frequently 'anti-highbrow'; my three copies yield two gibes at Epstein, and two cartoons depreciating artists. The best analysis of the attitude comes from the *New Statesman* of March 28th, 1931, in a valuable essay, *The Artist and the Gentleman*; it is reprinted in *Fleet Street,* a recent anthology of journalism, which is otherwise only useful for laboratory purposes. 'How inferior are the conceptions of "gentleman" and "artist" in daily use may be perfectly seen from Mr. A. P. Herbert's *Tantivy Towers,* in which we have both reduced to their lowest common measure as

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mere egoists, and this is exactly how they appear to-day in the eyes of the majority of readers of *Punch*, which caters so cleverly for this emotionally uneducated public.'

This *Punch* anthology (compiled by Guy Boas, Macmillan) is a document of some anthropological interest, for it conveniently delineates the ideal reader of *Punch*. He is evidently a cat-, dog-, child- and mule-lover, who has derived from his public school those qualities which the silk-stocking makers desiderate when they advertise for representatives—'Public school type preferred'—in short, a gentleman of the type described by Mr. Turner, 'a half-wit who gapes at the mention of philosophy or music or poetry, who thinks it bad form even to take cricket seriously, as the Australians, for example, take it, and who grumbled at the Germans attempting to win the war by gas when he was only attempting to win it by guns and bayonets.' The humour is below the level of adult response, consisting largely of adolescent verbalisms and circumlocutions, like the advertisements for bottled salt-and-beef. At least two of the items are repeated in a slightly varied form, for the kinds of appeal made run to type as the stock response is constantly tapped. And the emotional plane on which *Punch* works was beautifully illustrated by this Observation from a Sunday puff: '*Punch* has never forgotten that a comic poet should first of all be a poet. There are some lines of authentic loveliness among the jests of this anthology . . . (which) . . . remind one that *Punch* is an organ of taste and not just a receptacle for jokes.' The synthetic efforts at seriousness are even more betraying than the humour; those verses, instinct with nobility and strongly tainted with Kipling, indicate that *Punch* humour is the complement of a certain vicious type of the patriotic-domestic sentimentality. Some who accept this account may object that it is not worth mentioning here; but it seems necessary because *Punch* is a formative influence—a case might be made out for its exclusion from educational establishments. And they will agree that the spread of the *Punch* attitude to respectable journals is a sinister development.

It is not easy now to realize that in the 19th century we had a responsible press. Governments consulted the best papers, and the provincial sheets copied them, so that enlightened opinion radiated downward and outward; it is said that in the nineties

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the working man followed politics as he now pursues sport and manhunting. The diffusion of 'the best that is known and thought in the world' was not impossible, as it seems to-day, now that 'the free play of the mind upon every subject which it touches' is hard to seek in the press. *Fiction and the Reading Public* recorded the growth of 'a whole *Punch* literature,' and consonant with it we have a journalism exhibiting the same 'anti-highbrow' animus. We all know those weekly essays by the modern Lambs, whose lowbrow propaganda for their flocks is excelled in subtlety only by the genteel tobacco and tailoring advertisements, for copy- and essay-writer inculcate the same ethos; and in criticism one form of the attitude is the clever depreciation of established figures (*e.g.* D. H. Lawrence) who did not ask leave to be great. A specimen passage, approvingly quoted in a Sunday paper: 'It must be a pure act of faith for anybody to believe that human beings are the better for having access either to Nature or to the arts.' That some of these papers print responsible comments on politics does not relieve their total anæmia; politics are not an autotelic activity, and by neglecting the ends without which politics are so much ludo, the enlightened section of our press seems merely to be playing football with its own head.

If to particularize one mentions the *New Statesman*, it is because one would like to pay a personal debt to it, for its influence in forming a critical habit. It has been and (more likely than any other) may yet be, a valuable journal; and one still accords it a pious but unconfident recommendation. Except as evidence, and for teaching in school what criticism isn't, its literary side is negligible: the latest intelligent review of poetry was in the funeral number of the *Nation*, February 21st, 1931, though an adequate placing of a best-selling novelist occurs about every six months, ten years too late. With monotonous regularity it is taken in by book-club currency; and one fears, at times, that it is catering for, and hence forming, the kind of taste so adequately described in the essay already quoted from its pages. It is significant that Mr. Wodehouse's publisher finds it a worthwhile paper to advertise in, and that there recently appeared an advertisement from a *Punch* reader who wished to exchange papers with a reader of the *New Statesman*. Except for 'Critic's' column, topical articles of value are so rare (on patent medicines about a

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year ago, and more recently on a revivalist movement) as to be individually memorable; normally they are far below the level of the *New Republic*, which has of course more space for such contributions, as it does not insult its readers with puzzles, weekly essays, sports reports or motoring columns. (And if it did print a motoring column, it would be one that would really help a prospective purchaser—the *New Republic* is associated with Consumers' Research). Except for occasional lapses into sentimentality against British imperialism, the *New Republic* is an exemplar of what a journal of opinion should be; it provides instruction how to resist civilization. (See 'A Middleman of Ideas' in *Scrutiny* No. 1). Its journalistic 'debunking' is excellent—pertinent, and not merely bright—and its literary criticism deserves the name; it is never fooled by the substitute literature (Wilder, Wells, Hemingway and the saga-makers) for which English reviewers fall so gullibly. Nor does it strain after a spurious vitality by putting its personality across at get-together dinners for puzzle-solvers, to establish a flank-rubbing *camaraderie*—a process known to sales executives as 'The Speciality Appeal to Instinct,' or 'The Personal Touch in Advertising.' About the *Manchester Guardian* one would make the same comments and regrets as for the *New Statesman*, it too yields specimens of the higher Beachcombing.

The function of 'pulling out a few more stops in that powerful but at present narrow-toned organ, the modern Englishman' was never more needed, and a critical journal which took its responsibilities seriously would command respect and possibly circulation. As it is, the innocent are corrupted and the wrong stops pulled out, and 'our more elegant weeklies' will soon be no more than political supplements to *Punch*.

DENYS THOMPSON.

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TRAINING COLLEGES: REPERCUSSIONS

The scrutiny of Training Colleges published in our December issue produced a large number of letters to the Editors, but has not, so far, provoked the more complete investigation we innocently hoped for, or, indeed, any comment at all from any of the educational journals. Significantly, it is reported that at a meeting of Principals where the article was discussed, it was decided that there was no need to read it since 'outside' criticism could not possibly have any bearings on their particular problems. But the letters which we have received—almost all from lecturers in Training Colleges—would show, if they could be printed in full, that our case against the normal Training College system was completely justified.

Objections can be summarised under two heads: (a) that we did not know what we were talking about, and (b) that lecturers were doing their best and that it was rather ungentlemanly to mention the unavoidable defects of the present system. As for (a), a single quotation must suffice: 'I have no evidence that your questionnaire reached this college, and I cannot refrain from letting you know of the complete agreement with your criticisms of all of my colleagues who have seen the article.' We may say, for the benefit of those who complained that our survey was not 'scientifically conducted,' that the extract is representative.

We are tempted to go on quoting from the letters of those who confirm our case in detail and who comment on other aspects of the educational system, but we must reserve the mass of fresh material received, the fresh problems raised, to be dealt with in later numbers of *Scrutiny*. The objections under (b) do not seem to need an answer.[1]

Meanwhile, what is to be done? 'Bad as things are,' writes a correspondent (a university lecturer), 'I hope you will not be

[1]We have to acknowledge a report on 'Professional Courses in the Training of Teachers' by Miss Margaret Phillips (*British Journal of Educational Psychology*, November, 1931, February, 1932) sent us by the author. Much of the evidence confirms our own; but the credit side of the Training College account is given in terms too general to be impressive. As evidence for the statement that 'For many women the Psychology course is the most important

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persuaded to turn criticism too quickly into practical suggestions for immediate reforms without basic discussions; authorities, if at all affected, would just patch up the old machine and jog on for another decade or two.' And we agree that our first business is to obtain full explicit recognition of the situation as what it is, and to provide a clearing-house of ideas for those who are engaged in solving practical problems in schools, training colleges and elsewhere. As for the performance of this latter function, we should like to remind our readers that we are painfully cramped for space, and that our public is mixed, so that we are likely to be driven sometimes to what many will find unsatisfactory compromises: there are special problems that could be dealt with adequately only by (say) detailed illustration of technique, whereas, some immediate recognition of the particular problem being desirable, we can allow the expositor only a few pages in which to throw out some provocation to debate.

Moreover, as other correspondents remind us, we are committed to something more than has just been suggested. Many of the questions that we admit to having invited—regarding method, technique, and so on—can be answered with any show of adequacy only by providing books. As a note in the review pages announces, a start has been made.

We may add that already more than a nucleus of an informal educational association has developed.

A Scrutiny of Examinations is going forward, and we shall be grateful for help.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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part of their training' we are given such things as the following answer to a questionnaire: 'Psychology gives me a feeling of peace with the world. . . As life and living are matters of tremendous importance I feel that the course of psychology was tremendously important and valuable.'

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SELECTED ESSAYS, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 12/6d. net).

This substantial and comely volume contains the greater part of Mr. Eliot's influential criticism. There is about half of *The Sacred Wood,* the three essays from the crucial *Homage to Dryden* pamphlet and the Dante study entire. The additions on the literary side include essays on Middleton, Heywood, Tourneur and Ford; two excellent studies of Senecan influence on Elizabethan drama, a rather discouraged dialogue on Dramatic Poetry and an essay on Baudelaire.

The novelty in the essays on the dramatists and on Baudelaire is the appearance of Mr. Eliot as an appreciator of moral essences. In this encroachment on the domain of such verbose critics as Mr. Murry and Mr. Fausset, he is not, of course, trying to put across an individual conception of morality; tradition governs this as much as it does taste. Mr. Eliot's tradition of morality is the most respectable of all, and when he says that 'the essence of the tragedy of *Macbeth* is the habituation to crime,' one could do nothing but assent if it were not that the italics show that he is not referring to the man but to the play. Again, he tells us, 'in poetry, in dramatic technique, *The Changeling* is inferior to the best plays of Webster. But in the moral essence of tragedy, it is safe to say that in this play Middleton is surpassed by one Elizabethan alone, and that is Shakespeare.' But even if that is a safe thing to say, the way of saying it is not free from danger. For after subtracting the poetry and the dramatic technique what is there left by which the moral essence may be apprehended? Again, in the essay on Baudelaire he writes: 'In his verse, he is now less a model to be imitated or a source to be drained than a reminder of the duty, the consecrated task, of sincerity.' But is our sensation of the poet's sincerity anything more than one of the reactions attendant on the poem's successful communication? Is anything really clarified by talking of a technical as if it were a moral achievement? It seems a pity that an essay that at the outset affirms the importance of Baudelaire's prose works should not have given some consideration to *L'Art Romantique* and *Curiosités æsthétiques,* which illuminate Baudelaire's poetic much more than the diaries do. The 'revelations' in the *Journaux Intimes,* written later than the majority of the

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poems, are perhaps rather specious intellectualizations, the violent efforts of a man to whom convictions of that sort were a novelty, to create a 'strong personality' for himself; their forthrightness is deceptive, I think. But Mr. Eliot 'hazards' an illuminating conjecture when he suggests 'that the care for perfection of form, among some of the romantic poets of the 19th century, was an effort to support, or to conceal from view, an inner disorder.' And he goes on to say: 'Now the true claim of Baudelaire as an artist is not that he found a superficial form, but that he was searching for a form of life.' I quote this, firstly because it is a good saying in itself, and also because the form of expression is comparatively new in Mr. Eliot's work. As it stands it is paradoxical. Not quite so paradoxical as Mr. G. K. Chesterton methodically is, but surprisingly near it. It marks a cleavage between Mr. Eliot's earlier and later criticism. It oversteps the conscious limitations of his earlier method. It must be every ambitious critic's aim to resolve the dichotomy between life and art; and every superficial critic does it constantly with negligent ease. Whether Mr. Eliot has the philosophical stamina, as he certainly has the poetic sensitiveness, for such a task, remains to be seen.

The latter part of this volume is mainly occupied by essays on attitudes rather than works and here Mr. Eliot is heavily engaged with the Martin Marprelates of to-day and yesterday, some of them within the Church, like Viscount Brentford, and some outside it. The outsiders, are, in general, those who believe that art, culture, reason, science, the inner-light or what-not, may constitute efficient substitutes for organized religion. Arnold, Pater, Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Middleton Murry and some American humanists who loom more sinisterly in Mr. Eliot's consciousness than seems necessary over here, provide a variety of scapegoats. His diagnosis of the disease that must ensure the ultimate instability of all such eclectic systems, built up from 'the best that has been thought and done in the world' is devastatingly acute. The antidote is provided in *Thoughts after Lambeth*.

This volume leaves us then, except for tentative branchings-out, as far as literature is concerned much where we were after the publication of *Dante*. One should not, perhaps, grumble at

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that; but the impression given by this heterogeneous mass is not so profound as that given by the slim volumes that found their way into the world more quietly. The essays on general subjects dilute that impression, for Mr. Eliot is not outstanding as a 'thinker' as he is as a literary critic. His thinking is adequate to his own emotional needs, as a good poet's always is, but it has not much extra-personal validity. One may contrast the peroration of *Thoughts after Lambeth:*

> 'The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time; so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide,'

with Berdiaeff's lucid and virile exposition of a similar conviction in his *Un Nouveau Moyen Age.*

I must try and say briefly why Mr. Eliot's earlier work seems to me more valuable than his later, or it may seem that I under-rate it just because its conclusions are unsympathetic to me. The intelligence displayed in the later essays might be matched by several of his contemporaries; the literary sensibility of the earlier essays is not matched by any of them. 'Literary sensibility' is a horrible phrase and it does not sound a very impressive faculty, but when one considers how very few people there are actually capable of responding to poetry or word-order generally without prompting from its prestige, or message, or because the objects named evoke a pleasant response, perhaps the possession of this gift may be appreciated at its proper value. It is only the beginning, of course, but its absence vitiates the other critical faculties. Sometimes, when it is present, there is an absence of the co-ordinating faculty and thus the response is deprived of any significance beyond that of a pleasurable sensation. It was the presence of these faculties in unison which differentiated Mr. Eliot's earlier criticism from the 'appreciative' convention in vogue at the time. The method at which he aimed, and which he practised with such delicate skill is perhaps best described by a quotation he used from Remy de Gourmont—*ériger en lois ses impressions personnelles.* If Mr.

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Eliot has for the time being gone outside literature, the loss is very much to literature; no doubt there is a compensation somewhere. But literature, in spite of wireless and cinema, is still the life-blood of the time; we are not sots or sadists by accident and one should not be too fatalistic about the approaching dark ages. If literary criticism is not one of the means Mr. Eliot envisages of redeeming the time, nothing can obscure the value of his example. As our writings are, so are our feelings, and the finer the discrimination as to the value of those writings, the better chance there is of not being ashamed of being a human being.

EDGELL RICKWORD.

FORM IN MODERN POETRY, by Herbert Read; ESSAYS IN ORDER, No. 11 (Sheed and Ward, 2/6d.).

Probably I am the last person who should review Mr. Read's book: I mean that I seem to myself to distrust instinctively his conclusions, his methods, his sponsors, even his vocabulary. And the reasons for such a perfect distrust cannot be more than hinted at in a review. I shall of course do what hinting I can: but I hope no one will assume that I imagine I have done even the least portion of what is necessary.

To take an example: Mr. Read, in a 'direct statement on the nature of poetry,' quotes Signor Leone Vivante, who says, 'In the poetic period not only the attribute, but every word, every moment of thought, gathers up, renews the whole. The subject is recalled in its concept in every word of the proposition . . . . myriads of *nexus*—resemblances, accords, unities *ex principio*—form themselves. . . . On the other hand, constructive thought loses the *nexus* or necessities of principle proper to thought in its integral originality; if we except the *nexus* belonging to formal logic. . . . In other words, in constructive thought *nexus of inherence* are comparatively prevalent, in poetic thought *nexus of essence*.' These are not Mr. Read's words, but he approves of them; and I think they are very important for his essay. They are at any rate typical, not only of Signor Vivante's procedure, but of his own, and are worth examination here. They appear

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to say, not only that the succession of words in poetry is in some way more 'inevitable' than their succession in prose—it would hardly be worth while to say this—but also that this greater inevitability is produced in a certain way. If they make this way clear, then they are certainly very important, and a vexed question is solved. Do they make it clear? We must ask ourselves how strictly they are to be interpreted. The verbs 'renew,' 'gather up,' for example—do they mean what they appear to mean, namely 'summarize,' or merely 'keep alive in the memory of the reader?' If the latter, they suggest more than they actually mean; the statement, moreover, loses whatever importance it might have had. For any word, functioning not as a vocable but as the member of a period—whether this period be of poetry or of prose—has complicated references before and after: in the mind of the attentive reader does not exist apart from the period in which it is set, and easily becomes its symbol. If this is what the verbs mean, Signor Vivante and Mr. Read are not pointing to any difference between poetry and prose. On the other hand, if the verbs mean 'sum up' or 'summarize,' is the statement true? It seems to me obviously false. Or rather, it seems to me obviously false that every word in a poetic period sums up its predecessors; that any such word does so, seems to me very probably false. I cannot persuade myself that 'incarnadine,' in a passage from *Macbeth* quoted by Mr. Read as a specimen of poetry, 'sums up'—that is, 'renews' or 'gathers up' in any way significant here—the matter by which it is introduced. It seems to me, of course, closely connected with that matter; but that is what no one has ever doubted and what no one is concerned to deny.

So much to excuse my distrust of Mr. Read's vocabulary. But the passage I quoted serves another purpose. Signor Vivante distinguishes between logical *nexus* and those of essence. Perhaps in his book he glosses these terms; Mr. Read however, who equally with him draws advantage from them, does not. They are metaphysical terms; but in an Essay in Order we expect and demand metaphysics. Metaphysics alone can provide a basis for order. Yet it is just Mr. Read's metaphysical references which are of the vaguest. He does not explain how he would recommend the distinction between logical and essential *nexus* to those who, from Aristotle downwards, have held that essence is the source of

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demonstration. Nor, enveloping himself in a variegated cloud of witnesses—Croce, Freud, Santayana, Roback, Coleridge—does he inquire into that which alone can give their statements significance. He approaches the psycho-analysts with an appearance of caution: 'As a literary critic,' he says, 'that is, as a scientist in my own field, I insist on maintaining my territorial rights when I enter into treaty with another science. I accept just as much as seems relevant to my purpose, and I reject anything that conflicts with my own special sensibility.' That is, on matters on which he is expert he is not to be led by the nose. But is this caution enough? It is on these matters that nose-leading is least to be feared. The credentials of the psycho-analysts are not, to put it mildly, above suspicion: to enter into treaty with them without prolonged investigation is not an orderly proceeding.

From the psycho-analysts Mr. Read seeks support for a distinction he draws between character and personality. Character is a fixed disposition to act in a certain way; personality on the other hand, being responsive and sensitive, is 'essentially mobile.' It resembles, I imagine, prime matter or *nous*, which is potentially all things. Poetry is produced by the personality in an integral intuitive act; and a poem is subject to none but its own laws. This is Mr. Read's grand conclusion: adumbrated already in his opening pages, by a distinction between 'form organic,' possessed by a work of art 'with its own inherent laws,' and 'form abstract,' which is organic form 'stabilized and repeated as a pattern.' Organic form implies the fusing of structure and content 'in a vital unity'; form abstract the adaptation of 'content to a predetermined structure.' These doctrines are not new; and of the soundness of their psychological basis I am not competent to judge. But, in spite of their comparative antiquity, they seem to me to have a very unfortunate consequence for criticism. Unless I am much mistaken, the distinction between abstract and organic form, drawn as Mr. Read draws it, is thoroughgoing nominalism. Nominalism is the death of science, or rather, prevents its birth. To say that each poem has its own laws is to say that poetry, and therefore criticism, has none; just as to endow each member of a community with sovereign rights is to establish, not order, but anarchy. Mr. Read demands that, as a critic, he shall be acknowledged as a scientist: I do not see how, according to his

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doctrines, he can be ; nor does a close reading of the later portions of his essay convince me that he is.

I said above that the words I quoted from Signor Vivante were typical of Mr. Read's procedure. Perhaps that is now clear. Signor Vivante disposed of the problem of the relations between the words of a poem by locating the poem in any single word ; Mr. Read locates the whole of poetry in any single poem. He disposes of problems such as those of tradition by saying that any genuine poem is thereby modern. The procedure is a claim to solve problems by causing them to vanish ; and has as its principle the complete neglect of the analytic moment of knowledge in favour of the synthetic. There can be no doubt that it is reprehensible. A scientist above all can afford no Wordsworthian reluctance to dissect. Ruthless dissection would provide him, if with nothing more, with some scattered truths. Mere contemplation of a unity can of itself provide no one with anything—at least under normal circumstances. It reduces the critic from the rank of an articulate being to that of one who murmurs *O Altitudo!*

JAMES SMITH.

LEVIATHAN HOOKED

THE SHAKESPEAREAN TEMPEST, by G. Wilson Knight (Oxford, 12/6d.).

This volume is the third of a trilogy and provides the documentation for a thesis implicit in the earlier books. Mr. Knight believes that the structure of Shakespeare's plays may be best seen through a study of their imagery, and that this reveals the fundamental categories of the Shakespearean schema to be Tempests and Music. Polarity is established between these two, and a number of subsidiary images group themselves about the one and the other. A coherent approach to the whole of Shakespeare's work is thereby attained. Mr. Knight has in short provided Shakespeare with a philosophy which, while wholly idealist in its tendency, is strictly dualist in its organization.

It is much easier to detect a structural correspondence to this curious arrangement in the style of Mr. Knight than in that of the

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Plays. It is generally admitted, from Dryden onward, that it is characteristic of Shakespeare's genius to be rich, dishevelled, allotropic. Grammatical ambiguities, and verbal complexities, all the more obvious features of Shakespeare's style, confirm the judgment.

It is only by reducing poetry to imagery that Mr. Knight succeeds in erecting a schema: he ends by declaring that the Hecate scenes in *Macbeth* are 'The one stone necessary to complete the mosaic of our pattern' and that Theseus of Athens is 'a Christ-like figure.'

Mr. Knight's collection of references is both thorough and interesting, but in his desire to amass evidence he is inclined to ignore the context and the question of relative emphasis. For example, he says, apropos of Falstaff in *The Merry Wives*, 'The imagery is in the usual tradition. Mistress Page is compared by him to rich India merchandise ". . . she bears the purse too: she is a region in Guinea, all gold! . . ." ' But Falstaff is only making love for the replenishment of his purse (as he explicitly states in the passage Mr. Knight has represented by some dots) so that this image is hardly on a par with 'Her bed is India: there she lies, a pearl.' Moreover, it is isolated in the play, and therefore cannot have the cumulative weight of the jewel images in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Mr. Knight has endeavoured to find a constant reference to tempests and music throughout Shakespeare's work. It is well known in Shakespearean criticism that he who seeks shall find: but the citation of the imagery of storm in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew* only weakens the very admirable case that Mr. Knight puts concerning its importance in *Lear*.

The book is, in short, eccentric. There are some sensible remarks on the futilities of unenlightened scholarship in the Introduction, but they are countered by such statements as 'It is possible that a work of art is not intellectual in the ordinary sense, and demands a special intuition which transcends all reasoning; 'Poetry is a mystery. . . A man may be divinely inspired when writing poetry.' There have been hints of this attitude before: It is rather a melancholy spectacle to see one who so neatly exposes the Rationalist point of view swallowed up by that great Boyg of which Croce acts as a useful incarnation. It is precisely because

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Mr. Knight abandons criticism for adoration that he can seriously contemplate *Titus Andronicus* as a unit in the same pattern as *Lear*.

Mr. Knight's method of approach is very fruitful for the major tragedies, the later plays and some of the histories, but hardly for the comedies. There is also great risk in considering imagery apart from movement and rhythm. Mr. Knight's balance and judgment are not equal to his genuine enthusiasm and his acute sensibility.

M. C. BRADBROOK.

OXFORD POETRY 1932. Edited by Richard Goodman (Basil Blackwell, 3/6d.).

Oxford Poetry 1932 is dedicated to Wystan Auden, Cecil Day Lewis, and Stephen Spender. But, with certain exceptions, the poems of which it is composed appear to be almost entirely uninfluenced by any modes of feeling or developments of technique more 'modern' than those displayed in Mr. Edward Marsh's long-defunct 'Georgian' anthologies. The problems resolved or stated in many of these verses, and the attitudes conveyed by them to the reader, seem to have little or no connection with contemporary interests. The pleasantly retrospective mood, however, evoked by a perusal of almost any volume of *Oxford Poetry*, reminds one by reference to one's own more or less distant undergraduate days of the superb timelessness of Oxford; and when one reflects that two, at any rate, of the poets to whom the volume is dedicated were themselves contributors to one of its not very senior predecessors, one cannot fail to realize that the poets one is criticizing are remote only in place and not in time, and that the Oxford poet of 1932 may well be quite an important modern poet of 1935 or so. In a word there is something about the public school and university education (of which incidentally about nine-tenths of the better poets of recent years are products) which tends to induce a delayed maturity: a phenomenon which gives rise to the expectation, abundantly justified in one or two fairly recent instances, that quite an inconspicuous grain of talent discovered in *Oxford Poetry*, may possibly bring forth really considerable fruits of achievement within a remarkably short space of time.

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It must not be supposed from the foregoing remarks that I wish to imply either that *Oxford Poetry 1932* is by any means without present interest, or that all or any of the contributors to it are necessarily destined for the highest poetical honours within the next few years. As to spotting winners, I refuse to be drawn into any such futile and invidious attempt. As to positive achievement, my own personal preference goes to the work of K. N. Cameron, who seems to possess a very respectable talent for writing verse and for making intelligent use of good contemporary models—capacities which more than any others justify optimism as to a young poet's future, since sophistication and subtlety of feeling, in the nature of things, develop later, and may well be assisted by the possession of technical ability.

The Editor, Richard Goodman, is another who stands out for having evidently been affected by contemporary influences—in his case the *New Signatures* group, if one may so call it. At present he is not infrequently a trifle naïve, *e.g.*

> 'Leapers out of earth, they marched erect like steel,
> their arms were pistons
> their strength was the lovely strength of steel.
> Where the spirit leaned out to sing, their eyes were stars. . .'

But he has undoubted vitality, which one hopes will keep him from the pathic nirvana of sentimental communism, where many others, besides Mr. Middleton Murry, seem destined to find an asylum from the perplexities of the age.

GILBERT ARMITAGE.

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WYNDHAM LEWIS, A DISCURSIVE EXPOSITION, by Hugh Gordon Porteus (Desmond Harmsworth, 8/6d.).

Mr. Porteus is a disciple. The worship of Wyndham Lewis is his (inferior?) religion ; and one must not expect a devotee to be too critical of his divinity. He finds adequate praise difficult. Mr. Lewis's satire is better than Dryden's: his style as good as Shakespeare's (p. 118). 'I claim,' he says, 'for Lewis, purely on the strength of his *vision,* a place in art beside the greatest masters of all time.' One can't say fairer than that.

But though criticism of Mr. Lewis is too much to expect from the ecstatic Mr. Porteus, we may test his standard of values, perhaps, by his remarks about less divine persons. For example: Dr. I. A. Richards, with tremendous ingenuity and patience, is attempting to reduce art to a set of scientific formulæ.' Joyce has 'no central vision and a very limited field of invention.' These two remarks are, I think, sufficient to show the quality of Mr. Porteus's sensibility.

Lewis's admirers usually admit that the master is careless. But, say they, how much he *knows*. His carelessness doesn't really matter. Mr. Garman in the last number of *Scrutiny* implies that 'slap-dash carelessness . . . mere transcription of other people's views, . . . and a proclivity to follow . . . any red herring' are 'inevitable adjuncts of a uniquely vigorous style and a mind more than usually well-stocked and inquiring.' It may be said that 'any red herring' in Lewis's work, is far more frequent than 'any fresh egg'; and such eggs as there are are mostly foreign—imported from M. Julien Benda.

That Lewis is well-informed and intelligent is obvious ; but the exaggerated contemporary estimate of him seems to rest on two things—the amount he has written, and his own self-advertisement. The Enemy is simply impresario for Wyndham Lewis ; and like most impresarios, he exaggerates. Lewis, like Shaw, Wells and the Sitwells, sells his wares. Unlike the Sitwells, he really has something for sale, but it would be absurd to take him at his own valuation. He is a symptom, not a leader of the age. For like all successful ad-men he has come to believe quite uncritically in what he sells: he has become his own inferior religion: he worships (as Mr. Garman notes) Tarr and Pierpoint—a fact which seems to me to invalidate much of his criticism.

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Mr. Porteus bases his estimate mainly on Lewis's style and his satire.

The first he says is visual, imagist, the product of the Painter's Eye. Here I think he may be right ; for it seems possible that this explains the strange sterility of Lewis's style. Great emotive writing uses a fusion of many things—vision, sound, rhythm, meaning, etc. To use one of these things in isolation is to limit the possibilities of adequate communication. Mr. Porteus himself notes that it is necessary to regard Lewis's style as a translation into the visual. But this is a defect, not, as he supposes, a virtue. It is a misuse, or an inadequate use of language.

Lewis's satire seems largely self-indulgence. It reminds one of Halifax's dictum :—' Anger, like drink, giveth rise to a great deal of unmannerly wit.' I read recently of a German tailor, who, annoyed with his employer, had the latter's portrait tattooed on his behind. He exhibited it, to the delight of his friends, and the discomfiture of his enemy. Mr. Lewis's activity, in the *Apes of God,* and many of his other works, seems to me to be exactly analogous to the tailor's and just as valuable ; though he is scarcely the tailor's equal in precision and economy of technique.

T. R. BARNES.

NOTES ON LITERATURE AS A CAREER

A FACE IN CANDLELIGHT, by J. C. Squire (Heinemann, 5/-).

YOUNGER POETS OF TO-DAY. Selected by J. C. Squire (Secker, 6/-).

Mr. J. C. Squire, born in 1884, was educated at Blundell's and Cambridge. In 1907 appeared his first publication, a penny pamphlet named *Socialism and Art.* His first book, *Poems and Baudelaire Flowers,* came out in 1909 (it includes an eulogy 'To the Continental Socialists.') In 1912 he published a biography and his first parodies. In 1913, after *The Three Hills* (poems) and a second book of parodies he was appointed literary editor of the

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New Statesman, the new Socialist weekly. Poems, parodies, critical studies succeed until in 1919 Mr. Squire founded the *London Mercury*. He has since been principal reviewer of the *Observer*, founder of a literary cricket club, Chairman of the English Association, introducer of books and editor of anthologies. He is now a chief reviewer for the *Sunday Times* and *Daily Telegraph* and he has just organized a Defence Committee for buildings which keen critics (not Sir Reginald Bloomfield) declare poor work by an architect seldom above mediocre.

Mr. Squire's poems down to his new book have been marked by ineptitudes of imagery, commonplace themes, language of romanticist fashion, and absence of rhythmical individuality. Lacrimæ rerum, contrast of human transience and material permanence, thoughts beyond thought, yearning for far land or fair woman, etc., always recur. His poems are proper to a man without critical power and having no more creative ability than is needed for the vulgar craft of parody or writing tales of 'if-consequence.' In 'Pastoral' (1909) Mr. Squire looks gravely past his love's smile to her 'inner mouth and throat'

> Where like water-anenomes
> Pink mounds and tendrils float
> In silky salivan seas.

'At Night' (1913) describes him sitting at the window 'smoking and alive':

> Wind in the branches swells and breaks
> Like ocean on a beach
> Deep in the sky and my heart there wakes
> A thought I cannot reach.

'The World: 1918' (from *American Poems*, 1923) finds him there still:

> How curious and lovely and terrible is the world!
> I sit alone at midnight working here
> With ink and notebook and a glass of beer.[1]

[1]All Mr. Squire's volumes provide innumerable case-matter. The Augustan selection (Benn, 6d.) is the briefest guide to his mature deficiencies.

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From 1923 Mr. Squire published no books of poems until *A Face in Candlelight*. The old faults sprout in it once more. In 'The Return of the Muse' the dead fragments of his dreams rise up 'miraculously whole,' aureoled, and walk with linkèd hands on the green strands of bright crystalline streams and fly finally into the light on rainbow wings where they find loud harping 'And a sound as of a celestial choir that sings.' In 'John Donne To His Mistress' Donne talks of kissing 'The red limp langorous mouth, the yielding lips apart.' See also 'The Woods in November' (La Belle Dame motif), 'Winter Midnight' (Death rather than hopeless sorrow), 'They Learn in Suffering' ('You have forced my heart to red eruption now'), 'A Face in Candlelight' (all the world's queans in a modern woman). Critical opinions include:

> No other poet can give us the same grave pictorial beauty of the poem which gives its title to the book, alive and mysterious as a portrait by Giorgione—*Sunday Times*.
>
> One welcomes his return to poetry in this book of deep feeling, eloquence and wit—Robert Lynd.
>
> Mr. Squire must really see to it that we do not go another five years without poetry from him—T. Earle Welby *(Week-End Review)*.
>
> We cannot guess if these poems are a valediction, nor can we well believe it. But in that mode they have the 'lacrimæ rerum,' and their mortality touches the mind—*Observer*.

The *New Statesman* gave an unsigned review, as careful to be neither critical nor contemptuous as to praise, but not too highly.

Mr. Squire's *London Mercury* was to 'represent no generation and no clique.' In 1923 its editor reviewed 'The Waste Land':

> . . . Conceivably what is attempted here is a faithful transcript, after Mr. Joyce's obscurer manner, of the poet's wandering thoughts when in a state of erudite depression. A grunt would serve equally well. . . If I were to write a similar poem about this poem the first line from another work which would stray into the medley, would be Mr. Chesterton's emphatic refrain 'Will someone take me to a pub?'

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In 1926 he reviewed Eliot's *Poems 1909-1925*:

> . . . Usually he is obscure, so inconsequent that the kindest things one can suppose is that he is experimenting with automatic writing. Why on earth he bothers to write at all it is difficult to conceive: Why, since he must write, he writes page after page from which no human being could derive any more meaning (much less edification or pleasure) than if they were written in Double-Dutch (which parts of them possibly are) is to me beyond conjecture. . .

In 1927 Mr. Squire edited a *Cambridge Book of Lesser Poets*. In it he gives a nod of encouragement to Hopkins by including his 'Heaven-Haven.'

Mr. Squire's new anthology does not quarrel with his judgments, though he has been able to find for it no poems so worthless as his own. Its best comes from Cecil Day Lewis. The remainder is dull rubbish, born of every sentimental or simple attitude in a medley of writers, Blunden, Roy Campbell, Sylvia Lynd, Sassoon, Shanks, Sitwell, Wolfe, Huxley and others.

Reading it through will not weaken the belief these notes may give to any undergraduate after a career, that a milligramme of talent, much self-confidence, and a left-wing 'allegiance' can lead to quick advancement in the higher literary gangdom.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

MORE LAWRENCE

ETRUSCAN PLACES, by D. H. Lawrence (Secker, 15/-).

THE LOVELY LADY, by D. H. Lawrence (Secker, 7/6d.).

THE SAVAGE PILGRIMAGE, by Catherine Carswell (Secker, 7/6d.).

REMINISCENCES OF D. H. LAWRENCE, by J. Middleton Murry (Cape, 7/6d.).

THE EARLY LIFE OF D. H. LAWRENCE, by Ada Lawrence and Stuart Gelder (Secker, 7/6d.).

The latest—the last?—collection of Lawrence's stories will be valued mainly for the sake of *The Man Who Loved Islands*, which

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appeared first in *The Dial*. *Etruscan Places*, though not an exciting book, bears interestingly on the question, How much of romantic illusion was there in Lawrence's preoccupation with primitive peoples of the present and the past? How far did he really deceive himself in the quest that kept him wandering about the world, from Italy to Australia, from Australia to Mexico, and on? Some measure of self-deception there undoubtedly was in the hope that expressed itself in each fresh setting-out. But it was never for long, if ever, a radical self-deception—the crude hope of picking up (for he certainly believed a casting-back to be necessary) the lost continuity here, or there, in this or that primitive people. The *Letters* make it unmistakably plain (what should in any case have been gathered from the work) that he knew well enough what he was doing.

His migrations were a technique for inner exploration. And so when he says of the Etruscans, 'It is as if the current of some strong different life swept through them, different from our shallow current to-day: as if they drew their vitality from different depths that we are denied,' we do not inquire very anxiously whether he was right about them or not. What matters is that, in his exposition and commentary, he proves once again so plainly that he himself has access to 'different depths that we are denied.'

Of the three books about Lawrence it must be said that two of them, whatever regrets and qualms they may give us, are seen in contrast to the third to justify publication, though they quarrel: the justification, it may be added, does not, and could not, lie in any settling of the immediately personal issues. If the third has any justification, it is not one that can concern the reviewer: from his point of view it is a vulgar piece of book-making, dealing in such impertinent and worthless facts as that Strelley Farm is really such-and-such, and so on: it must make a number of personal identifications possible locally.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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BENTHAM'S THEORY OF FICTIONS. Edited, with an Introduction, by C. K. Ogden (Kegan Paul, 12/6d.).

J. S. Mill, in his essay on Coleridge, pointed to Bentham and Coleridge as the two men who in the early 19th century divided the field of serious speculation. 'Whoever could master the principles and combine the methods of both would possess the entire English philosophy of his age . . . every Englishman of the present day is either a Benthamite or a Coleridgean.' Mill's words still hold true—though, nowadays, it is the similarity of the main preoccupations of both rather than the opposition of their conclusions which will hold the startled attention of a careful student. Coleridge writes in the autumn of 1800 to Humphrey Davy: 'I have been *thinking* vigorously during my illness, so that I cannot say that the long, long wakeful nights have been all lost to me. The subject of my meditations has been the relations of thoughts to things'; to Goodwin: 'I wish you to write a book on the power of words, and the process by which the human feelings form affinities with them. In short, I wish you to philosophize Horne Tooke's system, and to solve the great questions, whether there be reason to hold that an action bearing all the semblance of predesigning consciousness may yet be simply organic, and whether a series of such actions are possible? And close on the heels of this question would follow, Is Logic the *Essence* of thinking? In other words, Is *Thinking* impossible without arbitrary signs? And how far is the word arbitrary a misnomer? Are not words, etc., parts of and germinations of the plant? And what is the law of their growth? In something of the sort I would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of Words and Things; elevating, as it were, Words into Things and living things too.' At the end of his life he gave his unpublished Opus Maximum the title: 'The Power and Use of Words.'

Compare Bentham, 1775: 'What we are continually talking of, merely from our having been continually talking of it, we imagine we understand; so close a union has habit connected between words and things, that we take one for the other.' Or

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'*Instrument No. 1,* Division of entities into real and fictitious; or say, division of noun substantives into names of real entities, and names of fictitious entities:

'By the division and distinction thus brought to view, great is the light thrown upon the whole field of logic, and thereby over the whole field of art and science, more especially the psychical and thence the ethical and moral branch of science.

'It is for the want of a clear conception of this distinction that many an empty name is considered as the representation of a corresponding reality; in a word, that mere fictions are in abundance regarded as realities.'

The history of modern philosophy sufficiently establishes that the starting points of great thinkers are of more importance to subsequent thinking than their conclusions. The similarity therefore of the preoccupations shown in Coleridge's only recently published letters and notes (Snyder, *Coleridge on Logic and Learning;* Griggs, *Unpublished Letters*) and in Bentham's more than sixty-year-long cogitations—now for the first time made conveniently available and set in due perspective by Mr. Ogden—is extremely remarkable. The two have already—through their conclusions, which are more easily put into currency—exerted an influence second to that of no other English thinkers. The time has come when their common choice of Language as the key problem of philosophy, and their complementary initial analyses will have an even greater influence on the course of thinking.

That Bentham, contrary to the ordinary opinion of him (conveniently displayed by Mr. Oakeshott in a recent number of *Scrutiny*) was a highly original, persistent, penetrating and careful thinker, as remarkable for his linguistic investigations as even for his political, social and legal reforms, Mr. Ogden, in this selection and exposition of his methodical writings, clearly makes out. This claim is an immense one, but the evidence is here for those who will read Bentham, who are aware of the paucity of useful work hitherto done in this field and who can appreciate the difficulty of the problems he is concerned with. He is not at first easy reading. In his old age he deliberately devised a style of exposition which to the unaccustomed eye will seem singularly heavy and labored. Read on, fall into the admirably calculated

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tempo of Bentham's thinking, master the pattern and learn when to expect the word which requires deliberation; and the effect is quite different. Mr. Ogden is not going too far in remarking that Bentham's style comes to have a charm as well as the merits of clarity and precision.

Some parts of Bentham's treatment will be more easily accepted to-day than they would have been ten years ago. His definition of Logic, for example. Latterly a definition given by Charles Saunders Pierce has won wide acceptance among logicians for the promise of enlargement and freedom it offers; it was a favourite quotation of the late F. P. Ramsey: 'Logic is the Ethics of thinking, in the sense in which Ethics is the bringing to bear of self-control for the purpose of realizing our desires.' Compare Bentham: 'Logic is the art which has for its object or end in view, the giving to the best advantage, direction to the human mind, and thence to the human frame, in its pursuit of any object or purpose to the attainment of which it is capable of being applied' (p. lxv). But this type of definition, as Bentham remarks, can be traced back to Aristotle: Bentham's singularity is in his perception of the defects of this art and his determination to perfect it. 'Should there be any person to whom the ideas thus hazarded present themselves as having a substantial footing, in the nature of *things,* on the one hand, and the nature of *language* on the other—it will probably be admitted that a demand exists for an entirely new system of *Logic,* in which shall be comprehended a *Theory of language, considered in the most general view.*'

The ideas thus hazarded comprised the Theory of Fictions, an important part of which was a development of 'the discoveries, half-concealed or left unperfected' of Horne Tooke. 'Almost all names employed in speaking of the phenomena of the mind are names of fictitious entities. In speaking of any *pneumatic* (or say *immaterial* or *spiritual*) object, no name has ever been employed that had not first been employed as the name of some material (or say *corporeal*) one. Lamentable have been the confusion and darkness produced by taking the names of *fictitious* for the names of *real* entities.' (We may compare M. Arsène Darmesteter, 'In none of the languages it is possible for us to study is there an abstract word which, if its etymology is known, is not resolvable into a concrete word.') 'Of these fictitious entities,' Bentham

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continues, 'many will be found of which, they being, each of them, a *genus generalissimum,* the names are consequently incapable of receiving what is commonly understood by a definition, viz. a definition *per genus et differentiam.* But, from their not being susceptible of *this* species of exposition, they do not the less stand in need of *that* species of exposition of which they are susceptible.'

The provision of this species of exposition was Bentham's most original positive contribution. For fictions (and these for Bentham included the entities for which most psychological words are used as well as those for which such words as *right, power, obligation* are used) 'the nature of the case affords but one resource; and that is . . . paraphrasis'—by Archetypation and Phraseoplerosis. 'By the word paraphrasis may be designated that sort of exposition which may be afforded by transmuting into a proposition, having for its subject some real entity, a proposition which has not for its subject any other than a fictitious entity.' Archetypation is the taking of 'some real action or state of things' as the original of the metaphor (dead or living) from which the fiction arises. Phraseoplerosis is the filling in of the parallel between them (p. 86). Some of the assumptions Bentham uses in his exposition will seem questionable to a modern reader—his use of images for example. But Bentham is often most startling where he seems most naïve. 'To a considerable extent Archetypation—*i.e.,* the origin of the psychological in some physical idea—is often, in a manner, lost; its physical marks being more or less obliterated by the frequency of its use on psychological ground, while it is little, if at all, in use on the original ground. Such psychological expressions, of which, as above, the physical origin is lost, are the most commodious for psychological use.' The implication is that such expressions are void.

The assumptions taken and the inferences drawn by Bentham are often so extreme that they may divert attention from the more important aspect of his work as methodology. Mr. Ogden's very skilful expository introduction does much to guard against this danger. (A recently published development of Bentham's theory of metaphor, Professor Scott Buchanan's *Symbolic Distance,* Psyche Miniatures, is of great assistance also). While bringing the many scattered portions of Bentham's work on Fictions into perspective, the inventor of Basic English—towards which Bentham

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supplied an important hint—contrives, without straining interpretation, to indicate the immense field into which his suggestions lead. A singular sympathy with Bentham enables him to portray, vividly though economically, the relevant personal aspects of this extraordinary figure. My extracts may make the book seem suitable only for the earnest students of meaning. But those who read of Bentham's early adventures with Ghosts (there is a charming portrait of him at Oxford at the age of 12½) or of the sad case of Mr. Beardmore will not fail to benefit from a lightening of their spirits.

I. A. RICHARDS.

GENTLEMAN VERSUS PLAYER

THOUGHTS AND ADVENTURES, by the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P. (Thornton Butterworth, 12/6d.).

The English are a feminine race, the perfect spies and intriguers, with an illimitable capacity for not letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing, and behaving so genuinely in their self-created legend of themselves as the straight-forward no-nonsense, stupid male that at first others are taken in. Afterwards they are not so sure ; indeed to-day it would be difficult to find anyone in Europe, Africa, Asia or America who is. Mr. Churchill has never really been trusted by the English because he is always letting the cat out of the bag. Honest Mr. Baldwin is the ideal figure for the English fascist government, the professional posing as the amateur ; Mr. Churchill is the genuine article.

The amateur is always interested primarily in himself, in his ideas and deeds as a father in the career of his sons, as extensions of his own personality, hence his love of publicity. The professional, interested only in his job, knows that if you are to realize your wishes, the less other people know about them, the better.

No one reading this book or indeed any by Mr. Churchill can credit him with having thought long or deeply about anything, but he is equally ready to write on any subject, the Quantum

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Theory, Cézanne, or the Old Testament, and except for the title you will not be able to tell which is which:

1. We may imagine a great ship of war steaming forward into battle. On the bridge there are only lay figures in splendid uniforms making gestures by clockwork and uttering gramophone speeches. The Engineer has taken charge of the vessel and, through the vessel, of the Fleet. He does not see a tithe of what is going on. How can he, locked in his engine-room far beneath the water-line and the armoured deck? He has stoked up all his boilers, he has screwed down all the safety-valves; he has jammed the rudder amidships. He utters nothing but the wild command, 'Full speed ahead.'

2. No, we must take the loss with the gain. On the uplands there are no fine peaks. We must do without them while we stay there. Of course we could always if we wished go down again into the plains and valleys out of which we have climbed. We may even wander thither unwittingly. We may slide there. We may be pushed there. There are still many powerful nations dwelling at these lower levels—some contentedly—some even proudly. They often declare that life in the valleys is preferable. There is, they say, more variety, more beauty, more grace, more dignity—more true health and fertility than upon the arid highlands. They say this middle situation is better suited to human nature. The arts flourish there, and science need not be absent. Moreover it is pleasing to look back over the plains and morasses through which our path has lain in the past, and remember in tradition the great years of pilgrimage. Then they point to the frowning crag casting its majestic shadow in the evening light; and ask whether we have anything like that up there. We certainly have not.

3. But it is in the use and withholding of their reserves that the great commanders have generally excelled. After all, when once the last reserve has been thrown in, the commander's part is played. If that does not win the battle, he has nothing else to give. The event must be left to luck and to the fighting troops. But these last, in the absence of high direction, are apt to get into sad confusion, all mixed together in a nasty mess, without order or plan —and consequently without effect. Mere masses count no more.

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> The largest brush, the brightest colours cannot even make an impression. The battlefield becomes a sea of mud mercifully veiled by the fog of war. It is evident there has been a serious defeat. Even though the General plunges in himself and emerges bespattered, as he sometimes does, he will not retrieve the day.

I shall be surprised if the reader is able to detect that the first of these concerns Ludendorf, the second Democracy, the last the technique of painting.

Like all amateurs Mr. Churchill is a hero-worshipper; first the pater, then the rest (can Lord Lloyd be the latest?) He has had the amateur's luck sometimes to have seen the wood where the professionals saw only the trees; he was one of the first in England to realize the weakness of *laissez-faire* and the necessity for State-planning but lacked the necessary patience and self-effacement to go further, the self-knowledge and moral courage to forgo the psychological satisfactions of home sweet home. Hence the sniffing round the dictators. He wants to have his cake and eat it. To enquire into the genuine nature of the State, to base his actions as the professional must upon a reasoned and deeply-felt philosophy, for that he has neither interest nor leisure: it was politics for him for the sake of the ride.

With the result that over Russia he exhibits all the hysteria of the invalid or of the unforgivably insulted; to discover that your coachman has not only thought of your schemes already, but is putting them into practice with a thoroughness and attention to detail of which you are incapable, must be galling, but Mr. Churchill might make some pretence at rationalizing this annoyance. He appears to know no more about communism than our left boot. Nor was it wise to touch on anthropology if this is the best you can do:

> 'The story of the human race is War. Except for brief and precarious interludes, there has never been peace in the world; and before history began, murderous strife was universal and unending. But up to the present time the means of destruction at the disposal of man have not kept pace with his ferocity. Reciprocal extermination was impossible in the Stone Age. One cannot do much with a clumsy club. Besides, men were so scarce and hid so well that they were hard to find.

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> They fled so fast that they were hard to catch. Human legs could only cover a certain distance each day. With the best will in the world to destroy his species, each man was restricted to a very limited area of activity. It was impossible to make any effectve progress on these lines. Meanwhile one had to live and hunt and sleep. So on the balance the life-forces kept a steady lead over the forces of death, and gradually tribes, villages, and governments were evolved.'

No, Mr. Churchill cannot candidly be said to know anything, but he has his talent. He could have been, and indeed, to a certain extent he is, a great writer. His huge comic history of the war is in our opinion the best of all the war books. He has at times an extraordinary verbal sense, *e.g.* when describing the scene just before the German March offensive he says 'It was an hour of intolerable majesty and *crisis*' or again at the meeting of Clemenceau and Foch in the volume before us, 'But, thank God, at that moment the greatest Frenchmen of this *awful* age were supreme, and were friends.' Indeed the whole article ('A day with Clemenceau') in which this paragraph occurs is Churchill at his very best.

We are unable to imagine any propaganda against Imperialist war more deadly than this account of senile homicidal maniacs:

> As we reached the road a shell burst among a group of led horses at no great distance. The group was scattered. A wounded and riderless horse came in a staggering trot along the road towards us. The poor animal was streaming with blood. The Tiger, aged seventy-four, advanced towards it and with great quickness seized its bridle, bringing it to a standstill. The blood accumulated in a pool upon the road. The French General expostulated with him, and he turned reluctantly towards his car. As he did so, he gave me a sidelong glance and observed in an undertone, '*Quel moment délicieux!*'

The old humbug can write. The contrast between artists and their creations is frequently startling, but we have never felt a more extraordinary one than this; to turn from the utterly humourless face which confronts us on the frontispiece to the savage vivid farce of the pages which follow.

W. H. AUDEN.

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SCRUTINY OF CINEMA, by William Hunter (Wishart, 5/-).

The mass of professional film criticism to-day is so beneath contempt that even the most elementary endeavour to discuss the cinema from any serious angle must be welcomed. What is needed more than anything is a set of Aristotelian canons such as Béla Balázs attempted brilliantly for the silent film in *Der sichtbare Mensch*. There is nothing of the kind yet in English although the raw materials given by Mr. Hunter in this pamphlet suggest that he is seriously enough interested to attempt the task one day. His scrutiny consists of 28 pages of notebook jottings on some 25 films by Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Chaplin, Pabst, Clair, Feyder, Ruttmann, Lang and Bunuel, with a short introduction, and an appendix on the sound film. There are many things of interest, chiefly a distinction between technique and creative contribution, and a really serious examination of the problem of rhythm. The art of the cinema is declared to be in its infancy. Compared with the other arts it is 'of quite minor significance,' though certain directors, Pudovkin and Eisenstein, 'from a departmental view are both Titans,' and Eisenstein 'perhaps one day will stand in the same relation to the cinema as the pioneer Uccello stands to painting.' There is firm insistence that a film is best as 'an individual experience successfully communicated.' There are excellent disposals of films of predominantly technical interest, or mere statements of 'a simple psychological case in complex images,' of films with too crude didactic prejudices, of films in which there is mainly 'transmutation of phrases into images.' In the set analyses where Mr. Hunter is clearly occupied with unrelated expositions he is at his best.

For so short a pamphlet there is far too much beating about the bush, too great a setting up and knocking down of the familiar Aunt Sallies, Galsworthy, Priestley, Academic art, the Censor and middle-class morality. This might be taken for granted with the enlightened audience obviously addressed in a serious scrutiny, and in exchange more explained for a cultivated but technically uninstructed public. The growing habit of solemnly quoting from the holy writ of Richards seems little more than a basket of kittens displayed at a difficult transition in a film to evoke uncritical ecstasy.

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The chief objection to the pamphlet is a lack of order and organization in much admirable material, and an evasion of important issues. A writer is rebuked for speaking of 'that something indefinable which is Pudovkin.' 'Surely,' says Mr. Hunter, 'it is the business of the critic, if he is to have any justifiable reason for existence, to define, or at least to attempt to define, that something indefinable,' but Mr. Hunter uses the word 'film,' sometimes in italics, without a hint of explanation. Of Ruttmann's 'excellent film *Berlin*' he says, 'Its technique is excellent, it is a *film*,' and Pudovkin's '*The End of St. Petersburg* is, I think, the finest complete film that the cinema has up to date produced. It is not necessary to discuss its technical qualities, nor its methods.' But surely, on Mr. Hunter's own showing, it *is* necessary. There is also a strange under-estimation of Eisenstein's contribution to the theory and practice of *montage*. It is untrue to say that Eisenstein 'remains too obsessed with the mathematical, metrical aspect of *montage*,' or 'does not seem to be sufficiently aware of the many complicated aspects of rhythm.' Eisenstein is never tired of pointing out that metrical *montage* is merely the most elementary of forms, and in his remarkable set of lectures to the Film Society some few years ago, and also his scattered articles, he analyses the increasingly complicated series of metrical, rhythmical, tonic and over-tonic *montage*, culminating in the ideological *montage* which would justify him in filming Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. The religious procession in *The General Line* which Mr. Hunter praises as 'an extremely brilliant example of rhythmical cutting' employs all four methods in almost symphonic elaboration.

If Mr. Hunter proposes to write a serious and rounded scrutiny, he would do well to set in order some of the basic problems. The peculiar contribution of the cinema as an art, its relation to literature (his analysis of Feyder's *Thérèse Raquin* from this angle is excellent), the problem of the scenario (several have been published in full or in fragment), the problem of the document (the relation between the sacred dances as used in *Storm over Asia* and as shown 'uncut' in a recent documentary film), the problem of impersonality (his note on 'the directorial aside' is suggestive), the function of prejudice and propaganda, the relation between image content and image sequence, the problem of directorial style, even the problem of the audience from

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the 'physiological-psychological' angle, as well as an historico-technical analysis of films such as *Warning Shadows, Woman of Paris, Marriage Circle, Doctor Caligari, Earth, The Blue Express, New Babylon, The Ghost that never returned, Fragment of an Empire,* and *Secrets of the Soul.* It may be objected that I am trying to tell Mr. Hunter how to write his book. Well, I am. That is partly what a review is for. What is clear, however, is that his samples justify me in giving him a large order.

J. ISAACS.

THE PRESS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY, by Norman Angell (The Minority Press, 3/6d.).

There are thinkers more tidy and writers more clear and excitative than Sir Norman Angell, but this booklet of his, first published in 1922, has a value which unfortunately seems permanent. It will be worth constant reissue until intelligent morality recovers some power in the world. Morality shares in none of the principles of modern journalism which Sir Norman Angell truly sets down. Newspapers must be *entertaining* (there is one 'entertainment' for the *Times* public as much as another for the *Express*. Cf. *Times* third leaders or Mr. Chamberlain's recent letter on wagtails). That is the first duty. Newspapers therefore must foster the l.c.m. of attitudes and emotions and prejudices of the mediocre in every social layer; and they cannot tell the full truth (in as far as a daily judgment on affairs can be 'true') if the truth is unpleasant. Apart from the power of advertisers on policy (exaggerated; the advertiser is more anxious over circulation than over views) and the possibility of bribery in certain instances (rare in this country; not from 'British morality,' but from the size of newspaper undertakings), moral values are kicked into Fleet Street gutters by the existence of each newspaper as a vast capitalistic enterprise, depending on selling itself as widely as possible and greedy for profits.

In its bones, that is Sir Norman Angell's unanswerable case. Every journalist is not a rogue; but every journalist is a half-marionette jerked by the newspaper industry (which is nine-tenths a rogue).

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State censorship, State monopoly of newsgiving, greater statutory power to interfere with press liberty cannot be justified by any (problematic) moral improvement. They would, for example, ossify into permanence present institutions by killing criticism and attack. What is Sir Norman's solution? None. No solution exists, unless miraculous means could be thought out for setting up, universally, high standards of value.[1] Palliatives? Sir Norman suggests two: making journalism a chartered profession with a professional code of honour and a status equal to that of law and medicine; creating a State Press, managed by a 'journalistic judiciary' pledged to impartial presentation of the news, independent of the Government of the day and fashioned much as the B.B.C. Other papers, etc., would continue.

On these it may be observed (apart from discussion of efficacy) that at present a journalistic code or a closed profession are not widely demanded by journalists, that the Institute of Journalists recently elected the Editor of the *News of the World* its president for a second term, that there is no realization (even among the generality of intelligent men of principle) of the extent of the present damage and danger, that the establishment of a State Press would be triumphantly fought by every paper in the country (cf. the attitude of the Press to the establishment of the *Listener*), that only a dictator (who would probably prefer suppression) or a parliamentary majority of a very different kind from any (Socialist or Conservative) in prospect could break such opposition or show any desire even for such a reform.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

[1]Of cinema attendance at Oxford: 'Does Hollywood languish unavailingly before the massed allurement of Theology, Law, Medicine, Literæ Humaniores, Modern History, English Language and Literature, Medieval, Modern and Oriental Languages, Physical and Biological Sciences, Philosophy, Politics, and Economics; the Parks, the Union, the Isis, and the "George"? Hollywood does not.' Roger Dataller, *A Pitman Looks at Oxford*.

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SNOBBERY WITH VIOLENCE, by Count Potocki of Montalk (Wishart, 1/-).

Snobbery With Violence is an account of the author's experiences in Wormwood Scrubs prison, whither he was consigned for six months by Sir Ernest Wild for the technical publication, by submission to a printer, of some manuscript verses, alleged by the prosecution, and found by the jury, to be 'obscene.' Some of the incidents related in this pamphlet are not unentertaining, but what is more interesting to the general public is the legal nature of the crime for which this unfortunate writer was awarded a considerable spell of imprisonment, for a first offence without the option of a fine (the sentence has, I believe, been criticized in some quarters as erring on the side of severity), and which almost any practitioner of letters, in the present unsatisfactory state of the law on the subject, might find himself convicted of, though innocent of any intention of transgressing the strictest canons of civic virtue. The power of the courts to punish the publication of an obscene libel—that is the communication, if only to a single person, not being a spouse, of any obscene, but not necessarily defamatory, document—is derived not from any legislative enactment, but from an authority assumed by the Star Chamber, and, on the dissolution of that tribunal, successfully claimed by the Court of King's Bench, to be the *custos morum* of His Majesty's subjects.

The legal definition of 'obscenity,' by which judges are guided in cases of this kind, is nearly as unsatisfactory as the legal conception of what constitutes 'publication.' This definition, the author of which was Chief Justice Cockburn, is as follows: 'The test of obscenity I think is this, whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscene is to deprave and corrupt those who are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands such a publication may fall.' What meaning should be attached to the words 'deprave' and 'corrupt,' how the tendency of a given publication to produce such effects is to be gauged, and what kind of persons are 'open to such immoral influences' belong to that esoteric class of knowledge that is locked within the breast of the judiciary, and to which the layman has no opportunity of access, except as a result of a deliberate or accidental infringement of its provisions. In other words, the position with regard to obscenity is this: the ordinary man has no means of knowing what he may or may not say in

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writing, but if he makes a mistake, God help him! That, quite apart from the outrageous and barbaric conduct of the authorities in connection with the works of Joyce and Lawrence, to mention only two notorious instances, is why a good many sane and respectable people are not altogether satisfied with our present law of obscene libel.

GILBERT ARMITAGE.

INVITATION TO POETRY, by G. Baseden Butt (Howe, 3/6d.).

THE ADVENTURE OF POETRY, by Frank Kendon (Black, 2/6d.).

ENGLISH PROSE, by John Brophy (Black, 2/6d.).

Hundreds of such unwholesome pretty booklets are continually being produced; the identical stale and sickly mixture (tinned milk and water) noted in *Scrutiny* No. 2 is inexcusably served up again. The *Invitation to Adventure* which begins with Milne ends inevitably with the Discovery of C. E. Montague and Walpole, and these guides will infallibly be recommended by the Junior Book Club—for the literary racketeers, like the brewers, believe in catching them young. The only excuse for reiterating their futility here is to remind the responsible how completely the most important part of education is in the hands of the uneducated, energetically fixing children for life at emotional adolescence; and how useless the assistance well-intentioned people like Mr. Brophy receive from their environment. As his last chapter indicates, his book would have been useful if he had had anything of a literary education.

D.T.

THE GESTALT THEORY, by Bruno Petermann (Kegan Paul, International Library, 15/- net).

Not a book that need be read by everyone interested in psychology. But it ought certainly to be read by anyone who finds himself making explanatory use of gestalt notions or taking them as a framework for his thinking. A full technical exposition of the theory is followed by a close critical examination, ending in a

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rejection of the gestalt psychologists' fundamental claims. A concluding section demonstrates the concealed 'metaphysical allegiances' to which the theory is committed, and through which, according to Petermann, it is rendered finally untenable. It is a laborious book to read, partly on account of its thorough treatment of technical matters, but largely because of the needless unwieldiness of its language.

THE CHILDREN WE TEACH, by Susan Isaacs (University of London Press, 3/6d. net).

A book whose excellences may not be recognized by those for whom it is intended. It is based on articles that appeared in *The Teachers' World*. In simple conversational language it offers teachers, especially those in primary schools, indications of the most recent psychological (but not psycho-analytic) investigations of childhood, and brief summaries of the more familiar work. Besides tending to induce general enlightenment in one's dealings with children is has the merit of keeping reasonably close to real situations and frequently offering practical suggestions. But its easy presentation of the subject, highly simplified yet not patronizing, may well deceive those who have 'done psychology' in their training college into supposing that nothing new has been said. D.W.H.

ANNOUNCEMENT

CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT: THE TRAINING OF CRITICAL AWARENESS, by F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson (Chatto and Windus, 3/6d.).

HOW TO TEACH READING, by F. R. Leavis (Minority Press; agent, Heffer, Cambridge, 2/6d.).

HOW MANY CHILDREN HAD LADY MACBETH? An Essay in the Theory and Practice of Shakespeare Criticism, by L. C. Knights (Minority Press, 2/6d.).

Since these books are meant to be part of the undertaking represented by *Scrutiny* we merely announce them.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

GILBERT ARMITAGE, author of *Banned in England* (Wishart) is reading for the bar.

W. H. AUDEN'S latest book is *The Orators: An English Study* (Faber).

T. R. BARNES is teaching English.

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